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Hafa Adai!

$1

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WATER TANK ONLY HAD COVER DAMAGE FROM YUTU BUT...

'CUC ended up replacing whole tank'

ETHICS TRAINING OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Newly-appointed Cabinet members participate yesterday morning in a training event focused on the Government Ethics Act. The training was facilitated by Ashley Kost of the Office of the Public Auditor. The training included discussion on prohibited political activities, gifts and gratuities, complaints and ethics violations, and conflicts of interest. Also discussed were restrictions and internal policies that would supplement and improve upon government employee ethics and promote the best interests of the Commonwealth. OPA is an independent agency of the Commonwealth government tasked with the responsibility to audit the receipt, possession, and disbursement of public funds and to perform such other duties as required by law.

» **Aldan wonders if there is overlap as NMHC allocated $20M for water tanks replacement, but EPA awarded CUC $21M for water, wastewater project**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Aldan

Rep. Vincent S. Aldan (Ind-Saipan) has disclosed that when they were doing the transition report pertaining to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., they found out that one of the three water tanks that was damaged during Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018 just blew a cover at the top, but CUC ended up getting a grant to replace the whole tank instead of just replacing the cover.

See CUC on Page 4

Writeoff bill for Medical referral promissory notes is now law

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has signed into law a bipartisan House bill to establish the Health Network Program under the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.,

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FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) presides over the Senate session yesterday morning. One of the issues discussed was Gov. Arnold I. Palacios Palacios' signing into law of a bill that writes off outstanding balances of medical referral promissory notes.

'It's unclear how Torres spent $93M CDL funds'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» **DeLeon Guerrero asks OPA to audit FEMA's CDL funds**

DeLeon Guerrero

To date, it remains unclear how and where former governor Ralph DLG Torres spent the $93-million Federal Emergency Management

See CDL on Page 4

Search for earthquake survivors enters its final hours in Turkey

By MEHMET GUZEL, SUZAN FRASER and SARAH EL DEEB
Associated Press

ADIYAMAN, Turkey (AP) —The desperate search for earthquake survivors in Turkey and Syria entered its final hours Monday as rescuers using sniffer dogs and thermal

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INSIDE

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Atkins Kroll is proud to launch the all-new, redesigned fifth-generation 2023 Lexus RX.
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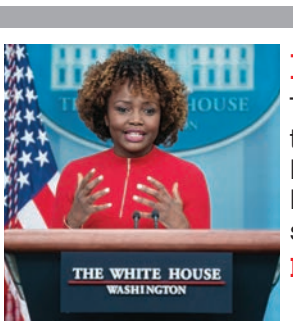

NATION
The downing of three aerial objects by U.S. fighter jets has prompted wild speculation.
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Experts have determined that Chilean poet Pablo Neruda died of poisoning nearly 50 years ago.
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Local

Palacios meets with DOD's OLDCC director O'Brien

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios met last week with Patrick J. O'Brien, director of the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation, as part of his meeting with various federal agencies in Washington D.C.

The DOD Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation provides technical assistance and grant funding to state and local governments like the CNMI to help support the military mission in the region, while also enabling civilian responses to local impacts.

The discussions between Palacios and O'Brien involved renewing commitments to collaboratively address economic and fiscal challenges, the path moving forward, and the CNMI's role in national defense interests. Current military projects were also discussed.

O'Brien directs the OLDCC and is responsible for the creation and performance of many programs enabling states and communities to partner with the Department of Defense and its installation and industrial bases, including: $1.9 billion program to improve condition and capacity problems at public schools on military installations; nearly $200 million in investments in support of the department's Pacific Defense Initiative in Guam; and $200 million Defense Community Infrastructure Program to support state and local enhancements to improve local military value, installation resiliency, and military family quality of life.

The OLDCC has invested about $15 million in the CNMI to grow capacity, heighten communications, and improve collaborative discussions relating to the mission of the U.S. Department of Defense in the region.

Palacios also met with other federal officials from the Department of the Interior, White House, and other agencies. He also testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, where he provided an update on the state of the CNMI affairs to committee chair Sen. Joe Manchin and other U.S. senators. ***(Office of the Governor)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios met last week with Patrick J. O'Brien, director of the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation.

CHCC launches field epidemiology certificate program

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., in partnership with the Pacific Islands Health Officers Association, launched the Strengthening Health Intervention in the Pacific's Data for Decision Making program in the CNMI. The program is made available to staff at CHCC and provides participants with a post-graduate Certificate in Field Epidemiology upon completion.

This effort aims to improve data capacity in public health surveillance and data-driven decision making to support rapid response and interventions needed to address health priorities.

The PGCFE program is accredited through Fiji National University and is modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Field Epidemiology Training Program. The training content has been formatted to meet the needs of the Pacific to identify public health challenges in the region and transform factual data into action.

The program began on Jan. 30, at CHCC on Navy Hill, Saipan and will conclude in September 2023. Course instruction is led by Dr. Thane Hancock, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention preparedness epidemiologist; Stephanie Kern-Alley, communicable disease regional epidemiologist; and Dr. Ruth Bessinger of PIHOA. The program includes five courses: Introduction to Health Information Systems, Outbreaks Investigation and Management, Introduction to Epidemiology and Field Epidemiology, Management and Analysis of HIS Data, and Field Epidemiology Final Project. Courses are offered through a combination of classroom-based teaching and online learning sessions followed by structured activities that encourage and support the model of learning "from work, at work, and for work." ***(CHCC)***

NMC

Hafa Adai Rent-a-Car is now a ProaPerks partner

Hafa Adai Rent-a-Car is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks partner, joining many other businesses and organizations. More information about their special promotion for ProaPerks card holders can be found at www.marianas.edu/proaperks.

Hafa Adai Rent-a-Car is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks Partner, joining many other businesses and organizations. All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now receive a 15% discount (applies to all car classes), as well as a waiver for the additional driver fee.

Hafa Adai Rent-a-Car is located at Joeten Motors on Beach Road. They can be reached by calling (670) 234-5562.

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include NMC alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing proaperks@marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

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Attorney for Petitioner Carl J. Castro

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF	CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-0020
	NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DOLORES G. CASTRO,	DATE: MARCH 2, 2023
	TIME: 10:00 A.M.
	JUDGE: Honorable Joseph N. Camacho
Decedent.	

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE DOLORES G. CASTRO OR HER ESTATE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **CARL J. CASTRO** has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue a Verified Petition to Admit Estate into Probate and Appointment of Administrator for the Estate of Dolores G. Castro the decedent. The proposed Administrator is Carol J. Castro The Attorney for the Petitioner is Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, whose address is 5960 Plata Drive P.O. Box 500730, Saipan MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date and at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing. Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or his Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or the claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claim should also be sent to the attorney for Petitioner, **ROBERT T. TORRES, Attorney at Law**, at the address above indicated.

Dated this 7th day of February 2023.

/s/_____
Clerk of Court/ Deputy Clerk of Court

Rota municipality aims to promote Rota getaway in Guam

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With Marianas Southern Airways launching its new flight schedule—a twice-daily flight from Rota to Guam—the municipality of Rota is in the works of promoting the island as a getaway spot for the people of Guam.

Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), among the first batch of passengers to fly Marianas Southern Airways' flight from Guam to Rota last Friday, stated that, with the additional number of daily flights, the Rota municipality is looking into promoting the island as a getaway in the Guam community.

"We are very grateful to Marianas Southern Airways for starting weekday direct flights between Rota and Guam and for being one of our partners in rebuilding our economy on Rota. Our municipality leaders are looking at robustly promoting Rota on Guam, including the military [population]," he said.

Aside from helping boost Rota's economy through tourism, the addition of daily weekday flights will also benefit the Rota community as it provides the people of Rota another option to travel to Guam, Manglona added.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rota dignitaries and members of the Rota community joined Marianas Southern Airways officials and staff last Friday in launching the airline's inaugural flight from Rota to Guam

"Of course, our residents on Rota are deeply appreciative of the increased frequency in flights," Manglona said.

Sen. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota) echoed Manglona, stating that the increase in the number of flights doesn't only connect the islands of Rota and Guam, but also opens economic opportunities for the Rota community.

"The additional flights offered by Marianas Southern Airways is welcoming news and something we, the people of Rota, are grateful for. The additional flights not only connect our people with their family and friends, but it opens our doors to economic opportunities," he said.

Sen. Donald Manglona added that MSA's new schedule further strengthens the bond between Rota and its airline partners.

"I would like to thank the management and staff of MSA for listening to our people by offering additional services to Guam. This is a step to building a stronger relationship with our business partners and we wish them great successes as they continue to offer and provide their services in connecting our Marianas. I would also like to thank U.S. [Customs and Border Protection], [the Commonwealth Ports Authority], and Star Marianas Air for coming together and figuring out a solution that benefits all stakeholders," the Rota senator added.

According to Saipan Tribune archives, Rota dignitaries and members of the Rota community joined Marianas Southern Airways officials and staff last Friday in launching the airline's inaugural flight from Rota to Guam

MSA vice president William Giles said MSA ultimately hopes that this new addition of flights traveling from Rota to Guam will benefit the Rota community as well as boost tourism for Rota.

"With this new flight, this will allow people from Guam the opportunity to directly visit Rota so we hope this will be a boost in tourism for Rota as well," he said.

Now that MSA has successfully connected all the islands in the Marianas through affordable, efficient air service, MSA is looking at expanding the number of flights it currently provides.

"We're really hoping to add more flights to Tinian. We currently have two daily flights from Saipan to Tinian and we hope to add more. Then, once we have progressed, we hope to add daily flights from Guam to Tinian," Giles said.

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang is joined by the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence director Maisie B. Tenorio, Youth Affairs Office special assistant Delbert T. Pua, Da'ok Academy principal Christine Tudela, the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, the faculty and staff of Da'ok Academy, and community partners, after proclaiming the month of February 2023 as Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
Correspondent

Teen dating violence and efforts to raise awareness of this issue took centerstage last Thursday with the signing of a proclamation designating February as Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, in his capacity as acting governor, signed the proclamation at the Da'ok Academy in the presence of members of the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence and several other community partners, including NMCADSV director Maisie B. Tenorio, Youth Affairs Office special assistant Delbert T. Pua, Da'ok Academy principal Christine Tudela, and members of the faculty and staff of Da'ok Academy.

Te proclamation highlighted several statistics relating to teen dating violence among young men and women, with 26% of women and 15% of men being victims of physical violence, sexual violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner and other forms of violence before the age of 18.

Close to a one in 11 female and one in 14 male high school students reported having experienced physical dating violence in 2019, with many victims of this type of violence either attempting suicide or getting involved in some sort of substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, and develop eating disorders. Despite the prevalence of this issue, often only one out of three individuals report them.

"Therefore, as adult allies, we have a duty not to ignore, downplay, remain silent on, or support attitudes and beliefs that allow violence and abuse to continue. It is crucial that we work to raise awareness and empower teens with tools to help themselves and their peers in abusive relationships," the proclamation states.

Apatang urged the CNMI community to come together this month "to raise awareness about abuse in teen relationships, empower our youth to make healthy choices in relationships, and promote programs that prevent this so that we may break the hurtful cycle of dating violence so that our youth can live lives free of violence and abuse."

Man accused of beating, strangling wife

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $20,000 cash bail on a local business owner who is accused of brutally beating a woman by strangling her and dragging her by the hair.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed yesterday a $20,000 cash bail on 6ICK7ERO tattoo shop owner Walter A. Florencio for allegedly beating his wife and strangling her.

Florencio, 29, is facing charges of strangulation, assault and battery to include domestic violence, and disturbing the peace to include domestic violence.

Following his bail hearing, Florencio was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody. He was ordered to return to court on Feb. 17, for a preliminary hearing while his arraignment was set for March 6.

Florencio is currently represented by assistant public defender Emily Thomsen, while assistant attorney general Dejon Redd serves as the prosecutor for this case.

According to court documents, the victim's mother, who reported the incident to police last Feb. 11, told responding Department of Public Safety officer Gerald Flores that Florencio constantly beats her daughter.

Later, the victim approached Flores to give her side of the story. Flores said he observed bruises on the woman's throat, a red bump under her left eye, scratches on her back by her right shoulder, and bleeding on her right ankle. He added that the right side of the woman's face was swollen.

In an interview with police, the victim stated that she caught Florencio sending messages to other girls and when she asked him about it, he denied everything and got angry. She said Florencio shoved and pushed her away, and kicked her twice in the leg.

The victim also told Flores that Florencio tried to strangle her. She claims he also gripped her hair multiple times, dragged her down to the ground, and slapped her repeatedly.

Later, Florencio, in what court records describe as a "freely given statement to the police," said that he and his wife got into an argument in the early hours of Feb. 11, around 4am about him messaging other girls on social media. He said that they went back to sleep after settling the argument.

Later that day when they woke up, he decided to watch a movie with his son because his wife was working and she gave them some money for the movie. Florencio said he and his son watched a movie, then bought dinner and went home.

Later, when he tried to leave their house, Florencio claims his wife held him back, which caused him to push her away. He added that he pulled her hair so she would move away from the door so he could leave.

Florencio said when he tried to go to the restroom to get away from her, she kept following him while pulling his shirt to stop him.

He said he shoved her and opened the screen door, not knowing she would still follow him. He said it was the screen door that scratched her feet.

Water interruption in Garapan on Feb. 17

There will be a scheduled water service interruption on Feb. 17, 2023, on Beach Road, Garapan, from 8am to 5:30pm.

This is meant to allow RNV Construction, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s contractor for the sewer main replacement project on Royal Palm Avenue and Ginger Avenue in Garapan, to relocate portions of the watermain that are in conflict with the sewer. It will be necessary to shut down the watermain to complete the work.

Customers in the area will experience low to no water pressure between 8am and 5:30pm on Friday, Feb. 17, 2023.

This project is part of the Sewer Main Replacement Phase 11 funded by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to provide a more reliable sewer system for customers in the Garapan area.

For safety of the men and women at the job site, proceed with caution and/or take alternative routes during the period of the sewer line repair. CUC appreciates the public's understanding and cooperation during this emergency wastewater service interruption.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(PR)***

Rip currents until Sunday night

The public is being warned that there is high risk of rip currents through late Sunday night.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents are present in east-facing reefs of the Marianas. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

The public is advised to stay out of the water along east facing reef lines. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. ***(PR)***

TURKEY

From page 1

cameras surveyed pulverized apartment blocks for any sign of life a week after the disaster.

Teams in southern Turkey's Hatay province cheered and clapped when a 13-year-old boy identified only by his first name, Kaan, was pulled from the rubble. In Gaziantep province, rescue workers, including coal miners who secured tunnels with wooden supports, found a woman alive in the wreckage of a five-story building.

Stories of such rescues have flooded the airwaves in recent days. But tens of thousands of dead have been found during the same period, and experts say the window for rescues has nearly closed, given the length of time that has passed, the fact that temperatures have fallen to minus 6 degrees Celsius (21 degrees Fahrenheit) and the severity of the building collapses.

The 7.8 magnitude earthquake and its aftershocks struck southeastern Turkey and northern Syria on Feb. 6, reducing huge swaths of towns and cities to mountains of broken concrete and twisted metal. The death toll has surpassed 35,000.

In some areas, searchers placed signs that read "ses yok," or "no sound," in front of buildings they had inspected for any sign that someone was alive inside, HaberTurk television reported.

Associated Press journalists in Adiyaman saw a sign painted on a concrete slab in front of wreckage indicating that an expert had inspected it. In Antakya, people left signs displaying their phone numbers and asking crews to contact them if they found any bodies in the rubble.

The quake's financial damage in Turkey alone was estimated at $84.1 billion, according to the Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation, a non-governmental business organization. Calculated using a statistical comparison with a similarly devastating 1999 quake, the figure was considerably higher than any official estimates so far.

In other developments, Syria's president agreed to open two new crossing points from Turkey to the country's rebel-held northwest to deliver desperately needed aid and equipment for millions of earthquake victims, the United Nations announced.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the decision by Syrian leader Bashar Assad to open crossing points at Bab Al-Salam and Al Raée for an initial period of three months. Currently, the U.N. has only been allowed to deliver aid to the northwest Idlib area through a single crossing at Bab Al-Hawa.

CUC

From page 1

At a joint hearing by the Senate and House of Representatives' Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications committees Thursday, Aldan, who chairs the House PUTC Committee, said one of transition team members looked into the water tank project and it was discovered that the cover of one of the tanks was blown off during Yutu.

Aldan, who also served as leader of the transition team at CUC, said when they came out to assess the project, it was determined that all they needed was to replace the cover.

"It's probably going to cost $100 or something like that instead of the million-dollar-tank that we got," he said.

At the joint session, Northern Marianas Housing Corp. corporate director Jesse S. Palacios said for CUC's three water tanks replacement project, the total allocation from the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery grant agreement is around $20 million for all three tanks combined.

Palacios said two water tanks are located in Kagman and Dandan on Saipan, and one on Tinian.

Aldan and Senate PUTC Committee chair Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) presided over the joint public hearing on the status of projects under the $243.9-million CDBG-DR grant agreement.

Aldan said that, at the same time last year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded CUC $21 million for their water and wastewater project.

Aldan wonders if these two grants are going to be doing the same water tanks project, or is this additional $21-million funding for the water and wastewater projects that CUC has under the federal court-stipulated order.

Northern Marianas Housing Corp. CDBG-DR program manager Kimo Rosario said CDBG-DR funds, just like any other federal disaster recovery funding, is subject to Section 312 of the Stafford Act, which prohibits the duplication of benefits.

Rosario said it is CUC's responsibility to inform NMHC when they receive funding that covers the same project. Otherwise, Rosario said, if they fail to inform them, NMHC needs to recoup or recapture those funds, because CUC would be in violation of Section 312. He said it's in the intergovernmental agency agreement.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

CDL

From page 1

Agency's Community Disaster Loan funds, according to Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), who also wants to know if there are any such funds that are still available.

She said the CNMI received the CDL in 2021 and that Torres was the expenditure authority of the funds at the time.

The Senate president wrote a letter to temporary public auditor Dora I. Deleon Guerrero last Feb. 3, requesting the Office of the Public Auditor to do an audit to ensure that the CDL funds were expended according to any approved spending plan.

The president asked OPA to conduct the audit to determine what fund the $93-million CDL loan was recorded and accounted for; total expenditures; total encumbrances; total reimbursements and identify what activities or programs would have reimburse the CDL Fund; and balance of CDL as of Jan. 31, 2023.

There was no immediate word on when OPA plans to conduct the audit and a timeline on when it expects to finish the audit.

WRITEOFF

From page 1

to provide for the orderly transition of medical referral services administration and operations to CHCC, and to write off outstanding balances of medical referral promissory notes.

Palacios informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) that he signed House Bill 22-77, HS1, SD1 into Public Law No. 22-33 last Jan. 31.

At the Senate session yesterday, Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) said this new law not only created a structure for medical referral for the CNMI, but also writes off the promissory notes that were executed by agencies over the past few years to patients that didn't have the means to shoulder the cost of medical care outside the CNMI.

He said there was no legal guidance on medical referral and this particular action by Palacios certifies that and now puts the appropriate structure of the program, thanks to amendments made by some members of the Legislature, with the guidance of CHCC.

"I want to thank Gov. Palacios for signing this into law and I want to thank the members of the Legislature and also want to recognize the former [committee] chair, Rep. Christina Sablan, for piloting this legislation," Hofschneider said.

Sablan, who was at the time the House Health and Welfare Committee chair, introduced the legislation that sets forth the duties and responsibilities of the Health Network Program.

Duties and responsibilities include facilitating access to care for eligible CNMI patients; maintaining program data and reporting to the Legislature and the governor; coordinating medical records; identifying and pursuing opportunities to improve care in the CNMI and reduce the need for patients to travel off-island; operating within appropriated funding levels; and promulgating rules and regulations.

The bill provides for the orderly transition of the off-island medical referral services from the Governor's Office to CHCC, and protects CHCC from incurring outstanding debts and liabilities of the former medical referral office. The bill further clarifies that all outstanding obligations debts, and liabilities of the Off-Island Medical Referral Program on the date of the transfer shall remain liabilities of the CNMI Office of the Governor, and shall not transfer to CHCC.

The House passed the bill with amendments on May 25, 2022. The Senate passed it with amendments on Dec. 28, 2022. The House accepted the Senate amendments and passed it on Jan. 5, 2023.

180-month prison term for meth trafficking, firearms violation

HAGATÑA, Guam—A 23-year-old man from Mangilao, Guam, was sentenced to 180 months in prison after being convicted of drug trafficking conspiracy and using and carrying a firearm during a drug trafficking crime.

Timothy Jerome Concepcion was sentenced on Feb. 6, 2023, in the District Court of Guam, according to a U.S. Attorney's Office news release.

Federal law requires that the five-year mandatory term for the firearm charge must be served after the 10-year mandatory term for the drug charge. The court also ordered five years supervised release and a mandatory $200 special assessment fee. In addition, defendants convicted of a federal drug offense may no longer qualify for certain federal benefits.

According to the USAO news release, an officer with the Guam Police Department stopped Concepcion for speeding in Asan, Guam, on April 4, 2022. Concepcion was with two passengers, an adult woman and a 14-year-old minor. When Concepcion exited the car, the officer saw a .357 caliber revolver in the driver's side door panel. A .380 caliber pistol was also found between the passenger seat and the center console. Further search revealed 14 clear baggies containing 390.8 grams of methamphetamine, an electronic scale, and a glass pipe. Concepcion stated, "the dope is mine, but I don't know about the guns." Concepcion also told the officer that, "It's not her dope. It's mine. I use it." He also possessed $2,565 in cash. One firearm was loaded and had an obliterated serial number.

Additional investigation revealed that from March 29, 2022, through April 4, 2022, Concepcion sold methamphetamine out of a room at the Dusit Thani Guam Resort. A co-conspirator collected money from the drug sales for Concepcion. Buyers also smoked drugs in the hotel room, oftentimes with

Concepcion. Throughout this activity, Concepcion carried the firearms for his protection, and informed others of their purpose.

"Conception armed himself to facilitate his illegal drug trafficking," stated Shawn N. Anderson, U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. "Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon occurrence. Combating violent crime, particularly that associated with drugs, is a high priority for the Department of Justice. The enhanced sentence in this matter demonstrates the consequences awaiting those who engage in this activity."

"As shown by the facts in this case, people who distribute methamphetamine tend to be armed and ruthless," said John F. Tobon, special agent in charge, HSI Honolulu. "HIS, along with our law enforcement partners and the U.S. Attorney Office, will continue to investigate and present for prosecution people who flood our communities with this dangerous poison and sell this highly addictive drug."

"The use of firearms by a drug trafficker makes a dangerous situation even worse," said ATF Seattle special agent in charge Jonathan T. McPherson. "Hopefully this sentence sends a message to would-be drug dealers that this behavior will not be tolerated. We will continue to investigate the illegal use of firearms, especially when they are tied to the drug trade."

This investigation was led by Homeland Security Investigations in collaboration with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Guam Police Department. This case was prosecuted by Rosetta L. San Nicolas, Assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of Guam. ***(PR/Saipan Tribune)***

Saipan municipal council presents Camacho with municipal treasury division ordinance

The 17th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council presented to Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho at the council's first session on Feb. 10 an ordinance that would require the creation of a Saipan municipal treasury within the Saipan Mayor's Office.

The presentation, held at the Saipan Leadership Kiosku in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, caps the 13-year journey of Saipan Municipal Ordinance 10-01-2010, which Camacho had authored when he was still the chairman of the 10th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council. The local ordinance had been approved by former Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela.

Saipan Municipal Ordinance 10-01-2010 was one of two ordinances the council leadership presented to Camacho at the meeting on Feb. 10.

Council chairwoman Marian DLG Tudela presented the two Saipan municipal ordinances to Camacho for the implementation of a Saipan Municipal Treasury division within the Saipan Mayor's Office.

"This is a significant presentation to the then-author of the 2010 municipal ordinance, now the current Saipan mayor 13 years later, as part of this new municipal government leadership's commitment in building its capacity by taking certain foundational post-COVID and post-ARPA steps in moving forward and

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, 17th Municipal Council vice chair Antonia M. Tudela, Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho, 17th Municipal Council chair Marian DLG Tudela, and 17th Municipal Council secretary Carmen C. Pangelinan.

building a solid self-sustaining municipal governance regime sustained by creative municipal revenue production strategies and innovative revenue generating capacity and financing," said Tudela. "To ensure optimal and efficient application of the municipal revenues would require building an internal capacity by the Saipan municipal leadership of Mayor Camacho and the 17th Saipan Municipal Council toward building an effective, efficient, reliable, and accountable municipal fiscal agent." ***(PR/Saipan Tribune)***

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NMI's alternative energy options for Marpi landfill assessed

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory were in the CNMI from Feb. 6 to 9 for preliminary discussions and site visits as part of the Marpi Landfill Power Supply Feasibility Study. This study seeks to identify power supply options that will provide 24/7, reliable, and resilient energy to the Marpi landfill on Saipan.

A draft feasibility report will be reviewed by the project team and shared with the public at the next All Planners Task Forces meeting, tentatively scheduled for April 10, 2023. A final version of the feasibility report will be submitted by DOE and PNNL in May.

The Marpi landfill has been powered by diesel generators since the landfill began accepting solid waste in 2003. Identifying and implementing sustainable and resilient ways to power the landfill is critical as the CNMI works to reduce climate pollution and achieve environmentally compliant and sustainable waste management systems.

CNMI OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Warren Villagomez, second from left, walks representatives from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy, and the Office of Planning and Development through the specifications and alternative energy capabilities of CHCC's Solar Photovoltaic Parking Structure. Constructed in 2019, the system produces 180 kilowatts of power for the hospital and was engineered to withstand more than 200 mile-per-hour wind speeds.

Resilient and feasible alternative energy options that are currently being assessed by DOE and PNNL include solar and wind systems with battery energy storage systems. The purchase of additional diesel generators to provide redundancy for the other clean energy systems is also being assessed as a possible alternative.

After assessing the final report and the power supply options presented, the Interisland Solid Waste Management Task Force—which is coordinated by the Office of Planning and Development in partnership with the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality, Department of Public Works, and the offices of the mayors— will decide on which approach to long-term power solution best meets landfill operation requirements and will move forward.

"The Marpi landfill is the CNMI's only [Resource Conservation and Recovery Act]-compliant landfill, and it's crucial that it operates in a way that is sustainable environmentally and economically. OPD and the ISWTF will continue to work closely with DOE and PNNL on this study, and we all look forward to receiving the final report," said OPD acting director Christopher A. Concepcion.

During the week, the DOE and PNNL representatives toured the Marpi landfill, assessed existing alternative energy systems at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s solar photovoltaic parking structures, the DPW Division of Energy office, and Marianas High School; met with Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s deputy executive director Dr. Dallas Peavey; and briefed the ISWTF on the current state of the study and the path ahead.

This feasibility study and next steps for the Marpi landfill are in line with goals for the CNMI identified in the 2021-2030 CNMI Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan.

CNMI OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Program Manager for Facilities and Maintenance for the CNMI Public School System Glenn Smith, the U.S. Department of Energy's Pete Gingrass, and Office of Planning and Development solid waste project coordinator for Saipan Michael Johnson discuss the alternative energy systems currently present at Marianas High School during a tour of the school's solar panel array on Feb. 7.

The existing alternative energy systems found at CHCC, the Division of Energy office, and

MHS and the alternative energy options being explored for the Marpi landfill are all pieces that align with Sustainable Development Goal #7's overarching goal to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. The overarching goal of SDG #12 is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. The ISWTF oversees the CNMI's progress toward achieving SDG #12, and making sure that the Marpi landfill can sustainably continue operations is a crucial piece to achieving SDG #12.

Learn more about the SDGs and the 10-year strategic plan for more sustainable and resilient development in the CNMI in the Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan, found here: https://opd.gov.mp/assets/2021-2030_cnmi_csdp.pdf. ***(PR)***

CNMI OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Project Manager for Micronesian Environmental Services, LLC James Benavente, third from right, points out a landfill leachate pump and the existing electrical systems that power it during a tour of the Marpi landfill for representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2023-010	CDBG-DR Compliance Specialist (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 Per annum	Feb. 15, 2023	March 2, 2023 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

SCC to host economic forum on Feb. 22

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will be hosting an economic forum on Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023, from 9am to 12pm at the Kensington Hotel Saipan in San Roque.

It will feature a panel of subject matter experts, to keep the community apprised of economic conditions, challenges, and opportunities the CNMI is currently facing.

SCC president Joe Guerrero, SCC board director Alex Sablan, and SCC executive director Kim Camacho recently attended the Guam Chamber of Commerce Economic Outlook 2023 at the Westin Resort Guam, with the aim of SCC hosting a similar event on Saipan.

"During the GCOC event, valuable economic information was shared with the Guam business community, and we intend to bring together CNMI economic information in a similar format through local experts for SCC's own forum," said Camacho.

This new approach to broaden communication within the CNMI business community is consistent with SCC's vision of creating an Island where businesses, families, and the community all succeed together. During the economic forum, SCC's hope is to share information with the community that will aid in the CNMI's business' success. SCC has assembled a panel of economic and subject matter experts for the forum to discuss the CNMI's economic situation.

The panel includes the Eugene Tebuteb, director of Workforce Investment Agency from the CNMI Department of Labor; acting director of Economic Development Kiyoshi Cody and acting secretary Joseph Rios Jr. from the CNMI Department of Commerce; Gloria Cavanagh from the Marianas Visitors Authority; Ivan Quichocho from the Hotel Association of the NMI; Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Joe Guerrero; Dave Burger, CPA, from the Burger, Comer, and Magliari, LLC; Economic Development manager Dave Guerrero from the Commonwealth of Economic Development Authority; and Matthew Deleon Guerrero, a CNMI economist.

The forum will be moderated by Brad Ruszala of Commonwealth Communications, with closing remarks from Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, president of the Northern Marianas College.

The SCC invites all SCC members, as well as future members, to attend and learn about the most pressing economic issues that will influence growth in the Northern Mariana Islands. Tickets to attend the economic forum are $20 for members and $30 for future members.

To purchase a ticket, visit the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's website, www.saipanchamber.org, or visit them at the Marianas Business Plaza on the fourth floor, Suite 413. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Joe Guerrero, Guam Chamber of Commerce board director Siska Hutapea, GCOC president Catherine Castro, SCC executive director Kim Camacho, and SCC board director Alex Sablan at the Guam Chamber of Commerce Economic Outlook 2023 in Westin Resort Guam on Jan. 12.

MVA, United co-op promotions increase Japan travel demand

MVA

Japan TV travel show "Tabi Salad" films at Micro Beach on Saipan in December 2022.

Interest in travel to the Marianas by Japanese residents continues to increase with a series of co-op promotions between the Marianas Visitors Authority and United Airlines.

Since September United Airlines has been operating three flights per week between Narita and Saipan. Most recently, United Airlines partnered with the MVA on two broadcasts by nationwide travel show "Tabi Salad," produced by Asahi Broadcasting Corp. in January 2023 in Japan, generating $2.7 million ad exposure value for the Marianas. The average nationwide viewership of the program was 10%.

"The 'Tabi Salad' production idea was first initiated by United Airlines, and as a result of the MVA's media pitch to the production company and United Airlines' air support for the film crew, we were able to bring the production to Saipan and gain tremendous exposure through the two episodes aired," said MVA acting manager Judy C. Torres. "We saw a clear uptick in inquires and bookings after the shows."

The MVA official website in Japan receives an average 1,600-2,000 page views per day. After the first broadcast on Jan. 14, the site had 3,200 page views in a single day, and after the second broadcast on Jan. 21, the site had 8,700 page views. In the two weeks following the broadcasts, United Airlines also reported 500 new bookings for travel to Saipan.

"United Airlines is committed to the success of the Narita-Saipan route, and since last September when the route launched, we have been working closely with MVA to increase awareness in Japan for travel to the CNMI. We understand the importance of this direct service to residents and how it provides support for the recovery of the tourism industry," said Sam Shinohara, United's managing director of Airport Operations, Asia-Pacific. "We are very pleased with the attention the travel show has garnered for the CNMI, and our United PR and Sales teams in Japan will continue to find opportunities to promote the CNMI as a top destination for travel."

United Airlines continues to actively initiate marketing and promotional efforts to stimulate destination awareness for the Marianas. On Feb. 25, 2023, the first-ever United Airlines Cup will be held at Coral Ocean Resort Saipan with players from Japan. Previously, the airline also provided air transportation throughout August, September, and October for media and travel agents to gain firsthand experience for media coverage of the destination and the development of Marianas travel products. ***(MVA)***

MVA

Japan TV travel show "Tabi Salad" films at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan, Saipan in December 2022.

Free classes this week at JKPL

Paddling canoe making class at JKPL

Register for a free cultural class on Paddling Canoe Making taught by Noel Noah Borja Quitugua at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. The class will be held on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 1pm to 4pm.

Participants will gain knowledge on the art of paper-folding methods used for constructing paddling canoes using basic materials such as index paper, bamboo sticks, and paper templates.

Registration is required. Seating is limited. Class participants must be 9 years old or older. Participants must have a valid library card clear of fines. Parents/guardians must sign a liability waiver form on behalf of their participating children and must adhere to public library policies and procedures. Contact children's librarian Celina C. Foreman for more information and how to register at (670) 235- 7315. ***(PR)***

Traditional body ornament replication class at JKPL

Register for free cultural class on artifacts replication such as traditional/contemporary jewelry making/body ornament and miniature wood carving and pyrography taught by Noel Noah Borja Quitugua at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. The class will be held on Friday, Feb. 17, from 3pm to 7pm.

Registration is required. Seating is limited. Class participants must be 16 years old or older. Participants must have a valid library card clear of fines. Parents/guardians must sign a liability waiver form on behalf of their participating children and must adhere to public library policies and procedures. Contact children's librarian Celina C. Foreman for more information and how to register (670) 235-7315. ***(PR)***

ROBERT T. TORRES
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
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Tel: (670) 234-7859 | Facsimile: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Petitioner Cristin S. Duenas Jr.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF JO ANNE SANTOS, Decedent.	CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-0019 NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS DATE: MARCH 2, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M. JUDGE: Honorable Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE JO ANNE SANTOS OR HER ESTATE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **CRISTIN S. DUENAS JR.** has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue a Verified Petition to Admit Estate into Probate and Appointment of Administrator for the Estate of Jo Anne Santos the decedent. The proposed Administrator is Cristin S. Duenas Jr. The Attorney for the Petitioner is Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, whose address is 5960 Plata Drive P.O. Box 500730, Saipan MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date and at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing. Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or his Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or the claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claim should also be sent to the attorney for Petitioner, **ROBERT T. TORRES, Attorney at Law**, at the address above indicated.

Dated this 7th day of February 2023.

/s/_____
Clerk of Court/ Deputy Clerk of Court

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-006-23

FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED FIRM(S) SERVICING THE AIRPORT INDUSTRY AND SPECIALIZING IN AIRPORT FINANCERELATED REVENUE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, AND PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGES

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA), a public Corporation of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, hereby requests proposals from qualified and experienced firm(s) servicing the airport industry and specializing in airport finance, related revenue planning and development, and passenger facility charges. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the CPA because the CPA wishes to acquire services and/or products that cannot be evaluate by price alone (NMIAC § 40-50-225 (a)).

The Proposal Package is available for pick-up beginning February 15, 2023, at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Bidders must submit all required documents listed in the RFP Package. All responses to this RFP shall take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged the proposer awarded for this project. Proposers shall also take into consideration all necessary badging requirements and fees for this project.

Questions regarding this procurement should be submitted in writing to Christopher S. Tenorio, Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority either by facsimile, or email cpa.receptionist@pticom.com with copy to skye.hofschneider@cnmiports.com on or before March 09, 2023.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Professional Services to provide Airport Finance, Related Revenue Planning and Development, and Passenger Facility Charges, Project No. CPA-RFP-006-23". One (1) original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. Local Time, March 20, 2023, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission will not be considered. Any proposals received after the submittal deadline shall be rejected and returned unopened.

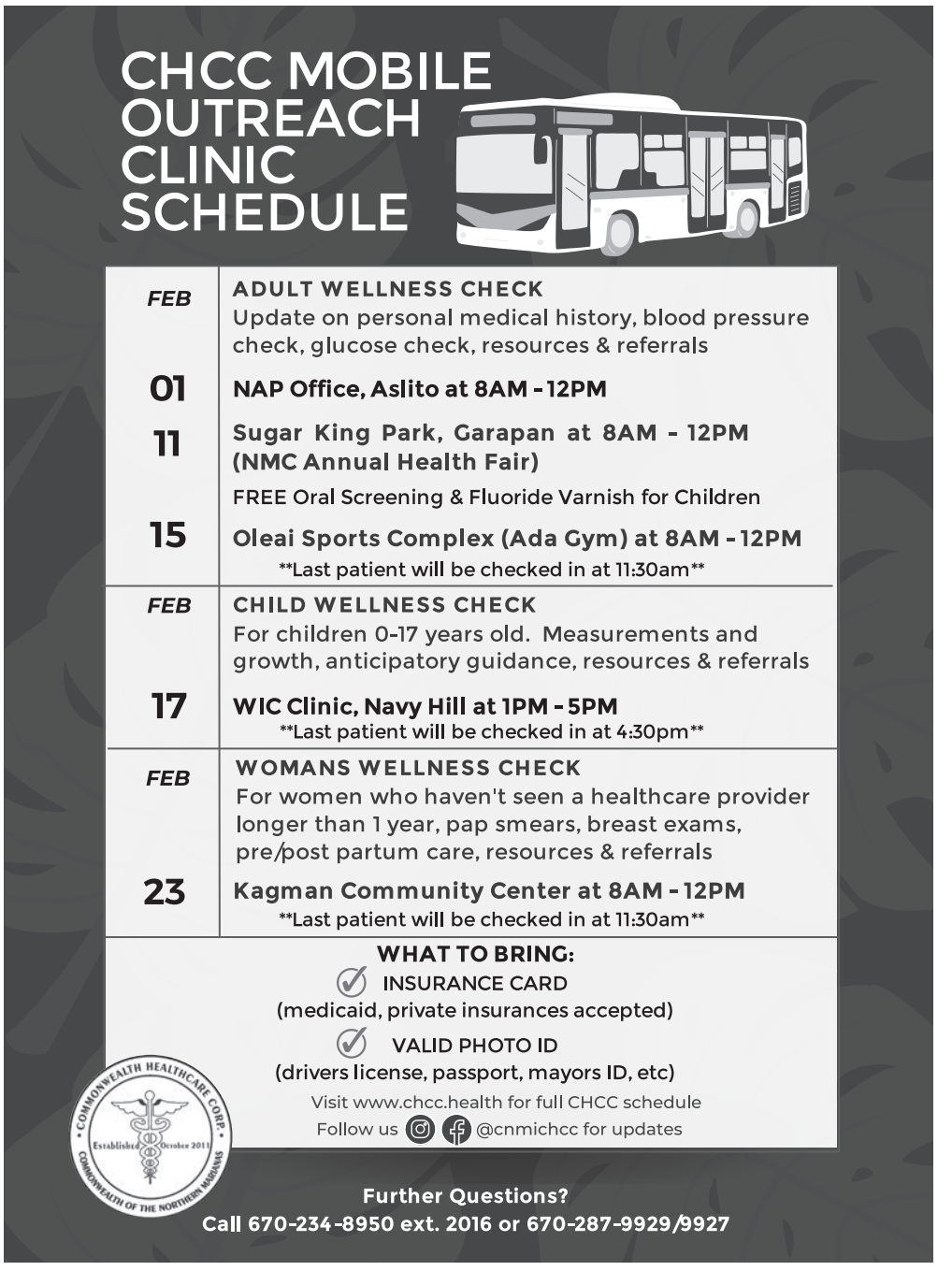
The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for; (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid/proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the proposal would not be in the best interest of CPA. The CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would not be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. This RFP shall be executed as per the CPA Procurement Regulations.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date _____


CHCC MOBILE OUTREACH CLINIC SCHEDULE
FEB
01
ADULT WELLNESS CHECK
Update on personal medical history, blood pressure check, glucose check, resources & referrals
NAP Office, Aslito at 8AM - 12PM
11
Sugar King Park, Garapan at 8AM - 12PM (NMC Annual Health Fair)
FREE Oral Screening & Fluoride Varnish for Children
15
Oleai Sports Complex (Ada Gym) at 8AM - 12PM
Last patient will be checked in at 11:30am
FEB
17
CHILD WELLNESS CHECK
For children 0-17 years old. Measurements and growth, anticipatory guidance, resources & referrals
WIC Clinic, Navy Hill at 1PM - 5PM
Last patient will be checked in at 4:30pm
FEB
23
WOMANS WELLNESS CHECK
For women who haven't seen a healthcare provider longer than 1 year, pap smears, breast exams, pre/post partum care, resources & referrals
Kagman Community Center at 8AM - 12PM
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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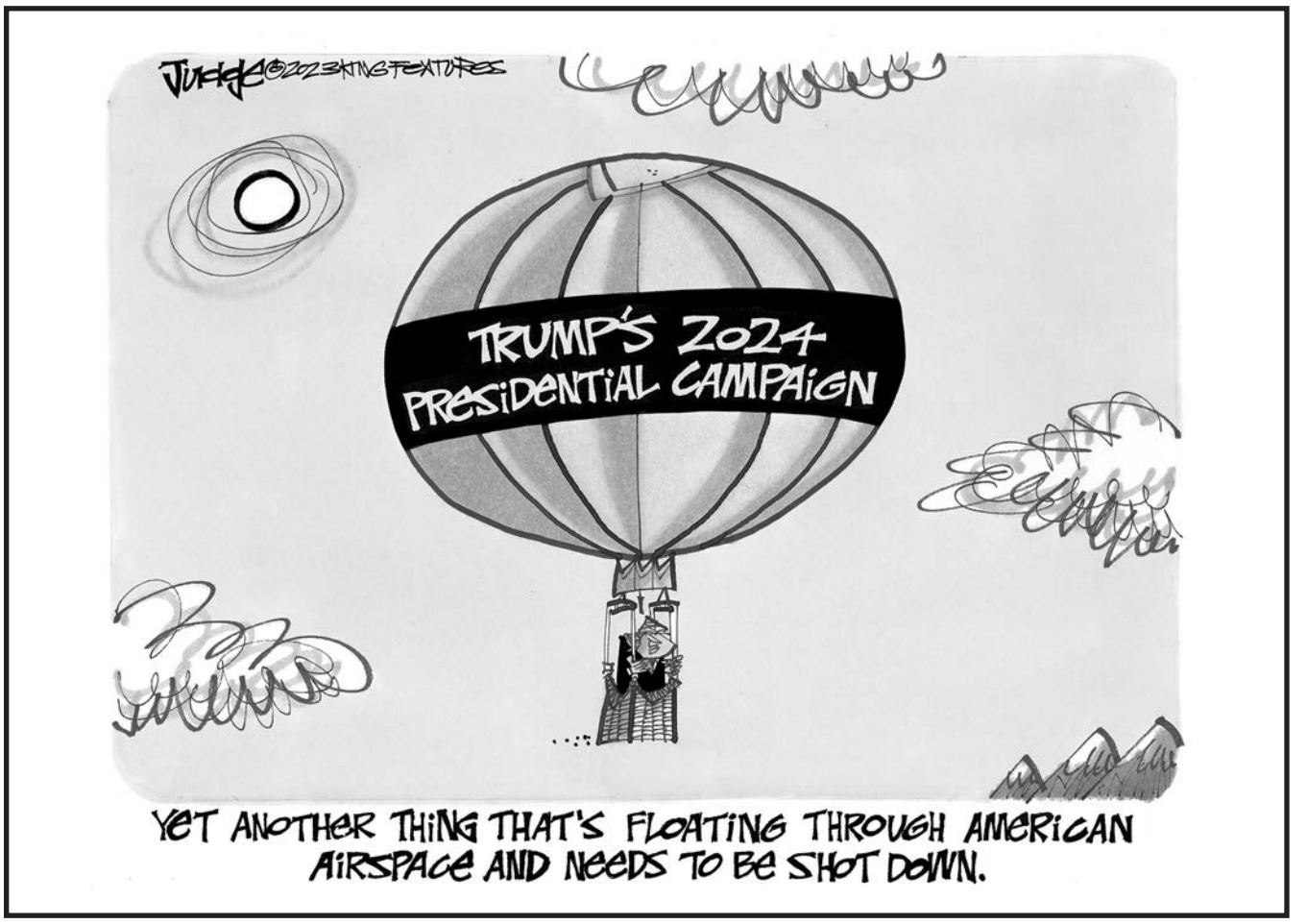
TRUMP'S 2024 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN
YET ANOTHER THING THAT'S FLOATING THROUGH AMERICAN AIRSPACE AND NEEDS TO BE SHOT DOWN.

EDITORIAL

Yes, Republicans have threatened Social Security. And they're still doing it

It seems the hecklers at last week's State of the Union speech owe President Joe Biden an apology. After some congressional Republicans tried to shout him down for saying some in the GOP want to cut Social Security and Medicare, Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., stepped up to add his voice to the chorus alleging that Biden was lying—then promptly reiterated his call for a universal "sunset" on all federal programs every five years, which would apply to Social Security and Medicare. Oops.

And it's not just Scott. Few other Republicans say it so bluntly, but the whole point of the current debt ceiling fight in the House is to force meaningful cuts in government spending, which cannot mathematically happen if Social Security or Medicare (or the equally untouchable Defense budget) aren't on the table. Then there's the party's long history of more explicit calls for cuts.

Biden, in his speech, triggered Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene and other extremists by alleging that "some Republicans want Medicare and Social Security to sunset."

"It is being proposed by individuals," Biden added, as Greene and others heckled like bleacher bums at a ballgame. "I'm politely not naming them, but it's being proposed by some of you."

The GOP histrionics notwithstanding, the fact is, various Republicans have long floated various ideas to trim the costs of the programs—privatization, means testing and/or raising the retirement age—which, whatever some of the merits, absolutely translate into benefit cuts. Any claim that those efforts are all about fiscal responsibility must be considered in the context of the almost $2 trillion the GOP added to the deficit with its 2017 tax cuts for the rich.

Scott's plan, first proposed last year, would "sunset" (his word, before Biden borrowed it) all federal legislation every five years. "If a law is worth keeping," Scott reiterated last week, "Congress can pass it again."

Scott has argued that, even though his plan doesn't make exceptions for Social Security and Medicare, Congress realistically would never let those programs lapse.

We have our doubts, particularly because some of his Republican colleagues are, once again, threatening a debt ceiling fight that could tank America's full faith and credit and risk global economic meltdown. If they engage in this kind of hostage-taking with that issue, just imagine what they might do if they're allowed to take prized hostages like Social Security and Medicare every five years.

None of this is to say there doesn't have to be some serious discussion about how to keep these two programs solvent in the decades to come. But the fact that the Republican approach always seems to come down to cutting benefits, rather than making the wealthy pay their fair share, is fair game for Biden and Democrats—no matter how much heckling the Marjorie Taylor Greenes of the world do.

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Earthquake survivors in Turkey face more tragic times as nation approaches economic collapse

By STEPHEN FRANKLIN
Chicago Tribune

YASIN AKGUL/AFP

Rescuers stretcher away Ece Koseoglu, 25, after being removed from under the rubble of a collapsed building following two massive back-to-back earthquakes that affected both Turkey and Syria earlier in the week, in Antakiya, Turkey, on Friday, Feb. 10, 2023. (Yasin Akgul/AFP/Getty Images/TNS)

Tragedy has long haunted the broad swath of land where earthquakes have just claimed thousands of lives, left many thousands of people injured and plunged already impoverished millions into yet deeper financial despair.

For centuries, an angry earth has shaken communities in the sunbaked mountains and valleys that sprawl across southeastern Turkey. But the earth's latest deadly roar comes at an especially vulnerable moment for Turkey and Syria, where an unusually bitter cold hourly seals the rubble and the earthquakes' countless bodies.

This tragedy is not a distant one for me.

As a journalist, I have traveled along Turkey's southeastern border and visited Syrian refugees and the places where they were living. But the deeper significance is that my wife and I, as Peace Corps volunteers, ran a small, meagerly supported orphanage for Turkish boys in a slum on the far edge of Istanbul more than five decades ago.

Many of the boys, at 6 years old and up, were the sole survivors of an earthquake in eastern Turkey. We used our Peace Corps salaries to buy the boys meat or fish one day of the week and pleaded with charities to provide clothes for them.

The enormous calamity confronts the two nations that have been equally struggling for some time to overcome massive economic crises and a lingering 12-year civil war in Syria that has made the country a pariah and sent millions of Syrians into exile in Turkey or independent pockets within the country. That includes a narrow scrap of land in northwestern Syria where they are huddled along the Turkish border and protected by fighters against the regime.

One of the places hit by the earthquake, this tiny haven is a remnant of a once-hopeful uprising that collapsed when Russia sent fighters and air power to rescue Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime. Many of those living there have fled again and again, leaving all behind. At the peak of the fighting, the Russian-led air war was exceptionally cruel in targeting hospitals there and elsewhere, leaving few medical resources for today's victims of the earthquake.

For those living in the regime-controlled areas, existence has similarly been difficult. Much of the nation's infrastructure has been demolished. Many Syrians have succumbed to poverty, and the financially crippled regime has markedly reduced subsidies.

So, too, as Turkey rushes to move thousands to safe housing, set up emergency medical facilities in cities and distant villages, and lead a global race to pull lives from the rubble, it is pinned down by a daunting economic collapse. An inflation rate nearing 90% in the last year has crippled businesses and meant great sacrifices for working-class Turks to buy basics. In February 2021, the U.S. dollar was equal to seven Turkish lira. Today, it is about 18.

Turkey generously welcomed Syrians fleeing mayhem in their

See EARTHQUAKE on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Chinese balloon is gone, but it's still making US-China relations harder to manage

JOE GRANITA/ZUMA PRESS/TNS

Debris falling from the sky after an alleged Chinese spy balloon was shot down by an F-22 military fighter jet over Surfside Beach, South Carolina, Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023.

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times. *Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.*

WASHINGTON— The Chinese balloon that floated across the United States this month, apparently on a mission to collect intelligence, began its journey as a curiosity. Then it became a political metaphor: a symbol of U.S. weakness to Republicans, a sign of President Joe Biden's prudence to Democrats.

Now, more than a week after the U.S. Air Force shot it down, the errant balloon is gone, but its impact is still reverberating.

The incident, and the larger Chinese program it revealed, is a serious obstacle to one of Biden's top foreign policy goals: stabilizing the prickly U.S. relationship with Beijing.

The balloon may not have collected much useful intelligence. Pentagon officials say they took steps to cripple it, presumably including electronic jamming.

But as it ambled from Montana to South Carolina, the device became an all-too-visible reminder of the never-ending presence of Chinese espionage.

Biden administration officials denounced the overflight as a violation of U.S. airspace, and blacklisted the Chinese companies involved. Republicans charged that the balloon had posed an imminent danger to the nation's security. A few claimed without evidence that it might have been carrying bioweapons or a nuclear bomb.

China insisted the vehicle was a civilian weather balloon and demanded its return, accusing the United States of "political manipulation."

If the objects shot down off Alaska on Friday, over the Canadian Yukon on Saturday and over Lake Huron in Michigan on Sunday turn out to be more Chinese balloons, or if the U.S. Navy fishes surveillance equipment from the ocean off South Carolina, Beijing will only look guiltier.

The State Department has revealed that Chinese balloons have flown over more than 40 countries. U.S. officials are sharing intelligence about those flights with other governments, bolstering the international backlash against Beijing's ambitions.

In sum, it appears China has scored the espionage equivalent of an own goal. Its balloon program could collapse if the United States decides to notify other countries when lighter-than-air vehicles are heading their way.

But the stakes are far greater than spy-versus-spy drama. The balloon episode is a reminder that, just as in the Cold War, detente between nuclear powers is harder to manage than it looks.

"All the worst instincts, the goblins just below the surface, have been unleashed on both sides," said Bates Gill, a China scholar at the Asia Society in New York.

The United States and China compete head-to-head for influence not only in Asia, but around the world. Their armed forces face each other in the Western Pacific and the South China Sea.

The two countries are dangerously at loggerheads over Taiwan, which Beijing's leaders have long vowed to reabsorb.

At the same time, they share a massive, tangled economic relationship. And they occasionally try to cooperate on shared interests such as narcotics enforcement, climate change and pandemic prevention.

So much is at stake that Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping formally agreed at a summit in November to put a floor under the relationship.

"I'm not looking for conflict; I'm looking to manage this competition responsibly," Biden said.

One of the first steps they agreed on was a visit to Beijing by Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken.

The balloon appeared, and Blinken called the trip off.

One of his goals, ironically, had been to improve communications to prevent minor incidents from turning into major crises.

But as the balloon soared across Montana, communications immediately broke down. When Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III tried to telephone China's defense minister, nobody in Beijing took his call.

Now the two sides appear locked in a cycle of mutual recrimination that will probably continue at least as long as debris from the balloon is turning up.

Still, both governments seem willing to restart their dialogue. That's a good sign.

The Biden administration has asked China for assurances that the recent balloon flight will be the last, apparently as a condition for rescheduling Blinken's visit.

But experts on China think it's unlikely Beijing will make a public statement on that count, which would look like an admission that it lied about the "weather balloon."

Blinken may have to be satisfied with the U.S. announcing any assurances made by China. He should also ask for improved crisis communications, beginning with a promise that next time, someone will answer the phone.

Then he can head to Beijing and resume building that floor.

If he goes, some Republicans will inevitably accuse the administration of being soft on China. They'll say that no matter what.

"A path toward improvement is going to be hard to find," said Bonnie Glaser, a China expert at the German Marshall Fund. "It isn't certain that the relationship can get back on track. There are so many ways it can deteriorate. … But it's a good sign that both countries agree that they still want to try."

Americans should remember a lesson learned during 40 years of Cold War diplomacy with the Soviet Union: Talking with adversaries isn't a reward for good behavior. It's a means of preventing small crises from becoming big ones.

Our interest in managing the high-stakes competition with China is much larger than a balloon—even one big enough to carry three busloads' worth of spyware.

Love Poem for February

LITERARY NOOK
By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

"Nothing endures, not even love
Though the warm heart purrs of the length thereof"
—Countee Cullen (b. 1903 — d. 1946)

Nothing Endures

Appreciation of life's beauty, understanding of love grows
As we do – upwards and onwards towards a full moon
Fades in time as we grow older in both body and brain
As the monthly cycles of every moon wax and wane.
Let it rip, go for it, go for the gusto, catch it while you can
Let your blood blush rush and bloom inside life's living room
Let it flourish nourish and flower before you meet your doom
Let it flow back and forth, the sum of your corpus callosum
Eventually time and torrid tides will recede as love's cycles
Revolve and slowly evolve towards our final dissolve
Then eternal darkness for eggs and sperm with the worms
As this sad, funny, and little old lovely world slowly turns.
(Joey Connolly, b. 1949 — still among the living and loving)

"Nirvana gapes for all things given;
Nothing escapes, Love not even."
—Countee Cullen

EARTHQUAKE

From page 8

country, and the number eventually reached 3.6 million. Years later, many Syrians live in the earthquake area in whatever housing they can afford or the refugee camp network created when they first arrived. However, their welcome has waned as some Turks view them as competitors for jobs or burdens for a struggling Turkish economy. Southeastern Turkey is one of the nation's poorest regions, one of the reasons large numbers of Turks have traditionally fled to large cities.

The history of earthquakes has also been the cruelest for Turks living in remote villages in mud homes or those made of similarly flimsy construction. But the quakes have also extracted heavy tolls in larger communities where construction precautions were not taken. That danger was theoretically swept aside by 2018 legislation that laid down new construction safety measures. But Turks have complained that the law has not been well enforced. Indeed, compelling video this week of the sudden collapse of a 14-story apartment building in Adana, a large city about 100 miles from the earthquake's epicenter, makes clear the quake's immense power and the precarious nature of housing for numbers of Turks.

And so, as before, I expect the survivors of this latest tragedy will most likely need far more than bandages and temporary housing to recover.

As will their nations.

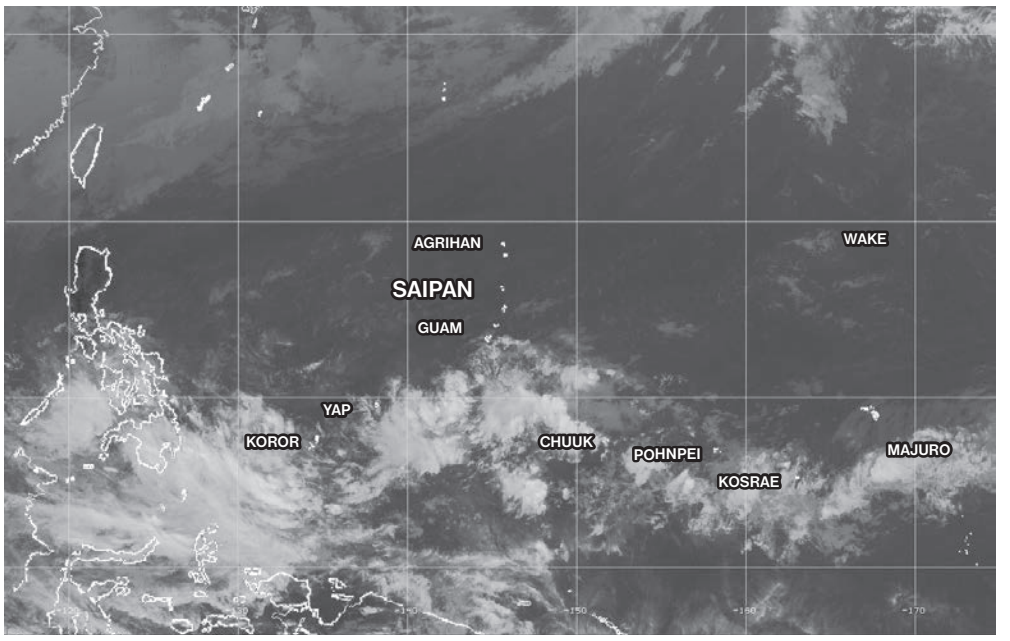
Stephen Franklin is a former foreign correspondent and labor writer for the Chicago Tribune *who has trained journalists in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. He and his wife, Suzanne, were Peace Corps volunteers in Turkey.*

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Scattered showers. Partly sunny	Scattered showers. Partly sunny	Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny
86º 78º	86º 78º	86º 78º	86º 78º	86º 78º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:04 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Partly cloudy skies, moderate trade winds and dry weather prevail this morning. Combined seas are between 7 and 8 feet with most energy from easterly trade swell and wind waves. A trade-wind disturbance is evident to our southeast with showers and a few thunderstorms.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Kosrae	Cloudy	85° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	72° / 59°
Beijing	Sunny	45° / 21°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°
Honolulu	Showers	82° / 73°
London	Sunny	43° / 34°
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 53°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°
Melbourne	Rain	66° / 55°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	78° / 71°
New York	Showers	53° / 36°
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 39°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	39° / 28°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	48° / 36°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 39°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	70° / 54°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 48°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	45° / 32°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	50° / 39°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	54° / 34°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:41 AM	6:20 PM
Thursday	6:41 AM	6:20 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	6:21 PM
Saturday	6:40 AM	6:21 PM
Sunday	6:40 AM	6:21 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:31 AM	12:58 PM	-
Thursday	2:34 AM	1:57 PM	-
Friday	3:39 AM	3:02 PM	-
Saturday	4:42 AM	4:10 PM	-
Sunday	5:41 AM	5:18 PM	-

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:21 AM	High Tide	1.37
8:27 AM	Low Tide	1.19
1:41 PM	High Tide	1.63
9:45 PM	Low Tide	-0.27

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau
OZ624/701	3:50PM	10:35AM+1	3,6 via Incheon

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	1, 4, 5, 7
OZ624	3:50PM	7:40PM	3, 6
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:20PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ623	9:00AM	2:20PM	3, 6
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 13, 2023

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M.	11:38 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:40 P.M.	3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.	9:58 A.M.	6,7

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	12:18 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:20 P.M.	4:38 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
10:20 A.M.	10:38 A.M.	6,7

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	6,7

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
10:20 A.M.	11:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
6:00 P.M.	6:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
8:40 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	6,7

SAIPAN TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:00 P.M.	8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
11:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	6,7

GUAM TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1:30 P.M.	2:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:30 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
12:30 P.M.	1:30 P.M.	6,7

ROTA TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:20 A.M.	8:55 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:25 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

GUAM TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
9:25 A.M.	10:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:30 P.M.	4:05 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

AK rolls out completely redesigned 2023 Lexus RX

TAMUNING, Guam—Atkins Kroll is proud to launch the all-new, completely redesigned fifth-generation 2023 Lexus RX. Praised for years for its exceptional design, lush interior and keen practicality, the RX brings a multitude of new features that are sure to delight Guam's drivers.

"We at AK are especially excited to introduce the all-new Lexus RX 350. Blending functionality with human emotion is Lexus' specialty and this latest model is truly a product of that trademark. The RX is not just a means to take you from A to B but rather an instrument that delivers a gratifying experience with every drive. With several trims to choose from, the RX caters to different demographics with varying preferences, making this luxury SUV a refreshingly versatile vehicle for our island," said Tom Mazzei, Atkins Kroll sales director.

The RX makes a striking yet graceful impression with its seamless exterior design. Its sporty spindle grille and integrated jewel-like headlamps blend effortlessly into the RX's face while its rear is adorned with updated Lexus badging and an L-shaped light bar lamp for a modern and cohesive appearance. The RX comes standard with 19-inch five-spoke alloy wheels with available 21-inch 20-spoke alloy wheels with a dark gray metallic finish. Available colors include Eminent White Pearl, Caviar and Iridium.

Known for its impeccable detail, Lexus does not disappoint with the RX's refreshing new interior. Available ambient lighting illuminates a sleek dashboard with a generously sized center display. Masterfully built with a driver-centric design, the RX's steering wheel controls, available color head-up display and Lexus Memory System for the driver's seat and side mirrors are just a few conveniences that cater directly to the driver's needs. Also available in the Luxury and F Sport models is multi-zone climate control with an interior air filter and smog-sensing automatic recirculation mode. Drivers and passengers can enjoy a wireless charger and an available digital rearview mirror for added visibility.

Equipped with the most thorough safety system ever integrated into a Lexus, the new RX brings more safety features than the outgoing model year with Lexus Safety System+ 3.0. Some highlights include Lexus' Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian Detection and Intersection Support which uses the RX's radar and camera to detect oncoming vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians even while turning at an intersection. Upon sensing a possible frontal collision, the RX will automatically slow and if needed, come to a complete stop. Also improved is the All-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control with Curve Speed Management. This intelligent feature keeps the RX moving at a safe, preset speed and distance from nearby vehicles and automatically reduces speed when driving along curves and corners.

Built on the New Global Architecture (GA-K) platform, the RX provides a lower center of gravity as well as ideal weight distribution. The many improvements that come with the new platform include more consistent suspension, more legroom, added cargo space and a lowered back door trim to decrease loading height. Further, now up to 198 pounds lighter and with an expanded wheel base, the RX delivers a quieter, more comfortable and more stable ride.

Lexus now offers all-new powertrains with its RX line. The standard 2.4-liter turbocharged in-line 4-cylinder engine with 8-speed automatic transmission delivers 275 horsepower and 317 pound-feet of torque with an estimated 25 mpg combined. Also available with the RX 350h AWD is the 2.5-liter in-line 4-cylinder engine with Lexus Hybrid Electric Drive that delivers 246 horsepower and 233 pound-feet of torque. Lexus estimates a combined 33 mpg for this trim.

"The RX 350 continues to be a popular choice globally and on Guam, it is no different. As our most sought-after Lexus model, many of the new RX units that have arrived are pre-sold so we encourage those interested to shop online today at AK-Guam.com or come see us in the showroom and take a test drive. They'll be delighted that they did," said Mazzei.

ATKINS KROLL

Atkins Kroll launched the all-new, completely redesigned 2023 Lexus RX yesterday in the Lexus showroom.

History and philosophy

First introduced in 1998, the RX or "Radiant Crossover" made history as the first luxury crossover ever produced and today is Lexus' best-selling SUV averaging over 97,000 sales per year in the U.S.

The RX's popularity is a testament to the intricacy of Lexus craftsmanship. From its birth to its latest iteration, the RX's unique design is founded on the Japanese expression, "omotenashi," which encompasses the essence of hospitality in terms of anticipating customers' needs as well as providing the highest quality products possible. ***(PR)***

ATKINS KROLL

Atkins Kroll unveiled the all-new, redesigned 2023 Lexus RX with a special Valentine's Day theme.

ATKINS KROLL

A close-up look of the 2023 Lexus RX's redesigned interior with all-new touchscreen display.

ATKINS KROLL

Attendees of AK's 2023 Lexus RX launch yesterday take a look at the all-new RX hybrid model.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Twitter's plan to charge for crucial tool prompts outcry

In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria, thousands of volunteer software developers have been using a crucial Twitter tool to comb the platform for calls for help — including from people trapped in collapsed buildings — and connect people with rescue organizations. They could soon lose access unless they pay Twitter a monthly fee of at least $100 — prohibitive for many volunteers and nonprofits on shoestring budgets. "That's not just for rescue efforts which unfortunately we're coming to the end of, but for logistics planning too as people go to Twitter to broadcast their needs," said Sedat Kapanoglu, the founder of Eksi Sozluk, Turkey's most popular social platform, who has been advising some of the volunteers in their efforts. Nonprofits, researchers and others need the tool, known as the API, or Application Programming Interface, to analyze Twitter data because the sheer amount of information makes it impossible for a human to go through by hand. (AP)

Japan manages growth in final quarter as tourism returns

TOKYO (AP)— The Japanese economy grew at an annual pace of 0.6% in October-December, the government reported Tuesday, managing to eke out growth after a contraction in the previous quarter. The world's third-largest economy has struggled amid restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic, a shortage of imported parts from China and rising prices — especially energy — worsened by inflationary pressures and the war in Ukraine. But the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, both abroad and in Japan, has helped a recovery in tourism and other economic activity. The Cabinet Office reported the economy grew 0.2% in the last quarter, compared with July-September, when it contracted 0.3%. It grew 1.1% in April-June. For the whole year of 2022, the seasonally adjusted real gross domestic product, which measures the value of goods and services a nation produces, grew 1.1% from the year before. Both household consumer demand and government spending grew in the final quarter of last year. Exports grew but imports fell, data showed. The numbers suggest a gradual economic rebound.

Pakistan set for tax hikes in return for massive IMF bailout

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Cash-strapped Pakistan will impose new taxes of 170 billion rupees this month in a bid for massive bailout, officials and analysts said Monday, even as they warned the new taxes could accelerate the country's spiraling inflation. The dire outlook from economists and political analysts comes after the International Monetary Fund delayed the release of a crucial $1.1 billion portion of a 2019 deal worth $6 billion, on hold since December over Pakistan's failure to meet the terms. The latest round of the talks between Pakistan and the IMF concluded Friday with the fund recommending steps including imposing new taxes. "The imposition of more taxes means tough days are ahead for the majority of the people in Pakistan who are already facing higher food and energy costs, but there is no other way out if Pakistan needs the IMF loans, and Pakistan desperately needs it," said Ehtisham-ul-Haq, a veteran economist. The stalemate in talks between IMF and Pakistan was seen as a blow to the government of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, who is struggling to avoid a default amid a worsening economic crisis and a surge in militant violence. Pakistan already is struggling with the recovery from record-breaking floods, which killed 1,739 people in summer 2022 and destroyed 2 million homes.

Nation

Aliens? Lack of US info on shootdowns breeds wild ideas

WASHINGTON (AP)—With few confirmed details from President Joe Biden's White House, the downing of three unknown aerial objects in as many days by U.S. fighter jets has prompted wild speculation about what they were and where they came from. It even fell to his press secretary on Monday to announce earnestly there was no indication of "aliens or extraterrestrial activity."

The president had no public events Monday and has offered little reassurance or explanation of what to make of it all, following the discovery of a Chinese spy balloon crossing the country and the unprecedented peacetime shootdowns that have followed.

U.S. officials said they still know little about the three objects downed Friday off the coast of Alaska, Saturday over Canada and Sunday over Lake Huron. But those shootdowns have been part of a more assertive response to aerial phenomena following the balloon episode blamed on an ongoing Beijing espionage program.

AP

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre speaks during a press briefing at the White House, Monday, Feb. 13, 2023, in Washington.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre did have at least one definitive statement to try to tamp down unrestrained theories: "I know there's been questions and concerns about this, but there is no—again, no—indication of aliens or extraterrestrial activity."

The U.S. government insists the three objects did not pose a threat to American security and that even the massive spy balloon provided "limited additive capabilities" to China's other surveillance programs. Still, they were shot out of the sky "out of an abundance of caution," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.

Biden's unparalleled decision to shoot down four objects over North America in eight days—when combined with U.S. officials' efforts to publicly downplay the foreign threat — has furthered the dissonant messages being sent about sensitive efforts to protect the homeland.

U.S. officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, acknowledge the confusion, saying the administration wants to keep the American public from becoming unnecessarily worried while also trying to maintain a tough posture toward China.

Kirby said that while the U.S. has no specific reasons to suspect the aerial objects were spying, "we couldn't rule that out." He added that the most recent objects, flying between 20,000 and 40,000 feet, could have posed a remote risk to civilian planes.

That legal justification for the downings—that the objects might imperil civilian flight—is viewed by some officials as such a remote possibility that it raises questions about whether it was a mere pretext for acting tough.

Biden "wants to appear tough on China, and this is a good example of where actions speak louder than words," said Brian Ott, co-author of "The Twitter Presidency: Donald J. Trump and the Politics of White Rage."

"If we find ourselves next year in a presidential debate between the two of them, Trump will try to cast Biden as weak on national security, and Biden will be able turn to Trump and say, 'How many of these Chinese balloons and unidentified objects did you shoot out of the sky?'"

Ott, a professor of communications at Missouri State University, said Biden's relative silence on the takedown of the Chinese balloon and other objects could be guided, at least in part, by his 2024 reelection considerations. Republicans, from Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell to right-wing firebrand Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, criticized Biden in the days after the Chinese balloon was spotted in U.S. airspace for being slow to act.

When pressed on whether the decision to shoot the objects down came in response to such criticism, Kirby insisted, "These were decisions based purely and simply on what was in the best interests of the American people."

With little information to go on, senators in both parties demanded answers as they returned to Washington on Monday.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced that senators would receive a classified briefing Tuesday morning and that Congress would work in coming weeks to get the "full story of what happened." Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, the No. 2 Democrat behind Schumer, said Biden "owes the country some answers."

Pandemic youth mental health toll unprecedented, data show

By LINDSEY TANNER
AP MEDICAL WRITER

The pandemic took a harsh toll on U.S. teen girls' mental health, with almost 60% reporting feelings of persistent sadness or hopelessness, according to a government survey released Monday that bolsters earlier data.

Sexual violence, suicidal thoughts, suicidal behavior and other mental health woes affected many teens regardless of race or ethnicity, but girls and LGBTQ youth fared the worst on most measures, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report. More than 17,000 U.S. high school students were surveyed in class in the fall of 2021.

In 30 years of collecting similar data, "we've never seen this kind of devastating, consistent findings," said Kathleen Ethier, director of CDC's adolescent and school health division. "There's no question young people are telling us they are in crisis. The data really call on us to act."

The research found:

■ Among girls, 30% said they seriously considered attempting suicide, double the rate among boys and up almost 60% from a decade ago.

■ Almost 20% of girls reported experiencing rape or other sexual violence in the previous year, also an increase over previous years.

■ Almost half of LGBTQ students said they had seriously considered a suicide attempt.

■ More than a quarter of American Indians and Alaska Natives said they had seriously considered a suicide attempt—higher than other races and ethnicities.

■ Feelings of persistent sadness and hopelessness affected more than one-third of kids of all races and ethnicities and increased over previous years.

■ Recent poor mental health was reported by half of LGBTQ kids and almost one-third of American Indian and Alaska Native youth.

The results echo previous surveys and reports and many of the trends began before the pandemic. But isolation, online schooling and increased reliance on social media during the pandemic made things worse for many kids, mental health experts say.

The results "reflect so many decades of neglect towards mental health, for kids in particular," said Mitch Prinstein, the American Psychological Association's chief science officer. "Suicide has been the second- or third-leading cause of death for young people between 10 and 24 years for decades now," and attempts are typically more common in girls, he said.

Prinstein noted that anxiety and depression tend to be more common in teen girls than boys, and pandemic isolation may have exacerbated that.

Comprehensive reform in how society manages mental health is needed, Prinstein said. In schools, kids should be taught ways to manage stress and strife, just as they are taught about exercise for physical disease prevention, he said.

In low-income areas, where adverse childhood experiences were high before the pandemic, the crisis has been compounded by a shortage of school staff and mental health professionals, experts say.

School districts around the country have used federal pandemic money to hire more mental health specialists, if they can find them, but say they are stretched thin and that students who need expert care outside of school often can't get it because therapists are overburdened and have long waitlists.

ACROSS THE NATION

3 people fatally shot, 5 hurt at Michigan State University

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP)—Police say three people have been killed in shootings at Michigan State University. The deaths are in addition to five people who were injured in the Monday night shootings, campus police said. Meanwhile, the search for the gunman continued. He's described as a short man with red shoes, a jean jacket and ball cap. The shootings began shortly before 8:30 p.m. at Berkey Hall, an academic building, and also ocurred nearby at the student union, a popular gathering spot, said Chris Rozman, interim deputy chief of the campus police department.

U-Haul driver's NYC 'rampage' leaves 1 dead, 8 hurt

NEW YORK (AP)—A man driving a U-Haul truck swerved onto sidewalks and plowed into cyclists and scooter riders in New York City on Monday, killing one person and injuring eight others before police were able to pin the careening vehicle against a building following a mileslong pursuit through Brooklyn. The driver was arrested and taken to a police station. His son identified him as Weng Sor, 62, a troubled man with a history of harmful behavior and stints behind bars. The mayhem unfolded over a harrowing 48 minutes as the truck tore through Brooklyn's bustling Bay Ridge neighborhood, hitting people at several points along the way before veering on and off a highway as police gave chase. Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell described it as a "violent rampage," but said there was no evidence of "terrorism involvement." The nine people struck by the vehicle ranged in age from 30 to 66. All were men. One of the injured people was a police officer.

New Mexico may seek veto power over spent nuke fuel storage

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)—The New Mexico Senate on Monday approved a proposed ban on the local disposal of spent nuclear fuel, unless the state provides its consent first. The bill from Democratic state Sen. Jeff Steinborn, of Las Cruces, could impact a proposed multibillion-dollar facility in southeastern New Mexico that is expected to temporarily store spent nuclear fuel from commercial power plants across the nation. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission may announce a decision as soon as March on whether to grant a license to that project from Holtec International. The Senate endorsed the bill on a 21-13 vote with Republicans and two Albuquerque-based Democrats in opposition to the proposed ban. The bill moves next to the state House for consideration, amid backing from Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. Steinborn said New Mexico residents should be wary of becoming "guinea pigs" for temporary storage projects before the federal government decides on a permanent storage site. His proposal found support among Democratic legislators, including Sen. Brenda McKenna, of Corrales, who noted New Mexico already grapples with the impacts of Uranium mining.

Asia

US renews warning it'll defend Philippines after China dispute

AP

Aircraft from the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz and the USS Makin Island fly in formation past Nimitz in the South China Sea, Sunday, Feb. 12, 2023, as Nimitz and Makin Island with embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit were conducting operations.

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The United States renewed a warning that it would defend its treaty ally if Filipino forces come under an armed attack in the disputed South China Sea after a Chinese coast guard ship allegedly hit a Philippine patrol vessel with military-grade laser that temporarily blinded some of its crew.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said China's "dangerous operational behavior directly threatens regional peace and stability, infringes upon freedom of navigation in the South China Sea as guaranteed under international law and undermines the rules-based international order."

"The United States stands with our Philippine allies," Price said in a statement after the Philippines on Monday accused a Chinese coast guard ship of using laser on Feb. 6 to block the Philippine patrol vessel BRP Malapascua from approaching the Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef that has been occupied by Filipino forces.

"An armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft, including those of the coast guard in the South China Sea, would invoke U.S. mutual defense commitments" under a 1951 treaty, he said. The treaty obligates the allies to help defend one another in case of an external attack.

Aside from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei also have overlapping claims in the resource-rich and busy waterway, where a bulk of the world's commerce and oil transits.

Washington lays no claims to the disputed sea but has deployed forces to patrol the waters to promote freedom of navigation and overflight—moves that have angered Beijing, which has warned Washington to stop meddling in what it says is a purely Asian dispute.

The contested waters have become a volatile front in the broader rivalry between the U.S. and China in Asia and beyond.

The Chinese ship also maneuvered dangerously close, about 137 meters (449 feet), to the BRP Malapascua at one point, the Philippine coast guard said, calling the Chinese action a blatant violation of Manila's sovereign rights.

Price said the Chinese coast guard's conduct was "provocative and unsafe" and interfered with the Philippines' "lawful operations" in and around the Second Thomas Shoal.

Myanmar's military rulers to let 'loyal' citizens carry guns

BANGKOK (AP)—Myanmar's military government plans to allow people who are "loyal to the nation," including government employees and retired military personnel, to carry licensed firearms, but they must comply with orders from local authorities to participate in security and law enforcement actions, the military and media reports said.

The announcement fanned fears of even more violence in a country wracked by what some United Nations experts have called a civil war.

The military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi two years ago, triggering widespread peaceful protests that turned into armed resistance after security forces used lethal force to suppress all opposition.

A 15-page document about the new gun policy attributed to the Ministry of Home Affairs was initially circulated on pro-military Facebook accounts and Telegram channels. It was also published by pro-military and independent news outlets, which stated that it had been issued on Jan. 31 after being approved in December at a Cabinet meeting.

The new policy would allow people over the age of 18 to be licensed to carry several types of guns and ammunition. The document says recipients of gun permits must be "loyal to the nation, of good moral character" and not involved in disturbing state security. It also says license holders must comply when instructed by local authorities to participate in security and law enforcement actions.

The military's spokesperson, Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, confirmed the policy Sunday to the BBC Burmese-language service, saying it needed to be issued because some people were asking to carry weapons to protect against attacks by anti-military groups.

Two pro-military online news media quoted Police Brig.-Gen Kyaw Lin, spokesperson for the Ministry of Home Affairs, as saying that the policy revives and modifies one introduced in 1977 by the government of the late dictator Gen. Ne Win. After a massive but unsuccessful popular pro-democracy uprising in 1988, the military revoked gun licenses for civilians and ordered people to turn in all firearms.

World

Russia pushes advance on Bakhmut

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Fierce battles raged outside Bakhmut as Russian forces pushed their advance on the eastern city with heavy shelling and infantry attacks, Ukraine's presidential office said Monday, with at least five civilians killed and as many wounded in action across the war-torn country in the last 24 hours.

The presidential office said the situation in Bakhmut's northern suburb of Paraskoviivka is "difficult" as Russian forces continued to pummel the area with "intense shelling and storming actions." The nearby town of Vuhledar is also under heavy bombardment.

Ukrainian soldiers began training on Leopard 2 battle tanks, Germany's Defense Ministry spokeswoman Nadine Krueger said in Berlin. Germany pledged to deliver 14 of the tanks to Ukraine by the end of March.

Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg again urged Ukraine's Western allies to ramp up their military support. Asked Monday when he expects Russia's so-called spring offensive to begin, Stoltenberg said that "the reality is that we have seen the start already."

"For me, this just highlights the importance of timing. It's urgent to provide Ukraine with more weapons," he told reporters in Brussels. Stoltenberg said that NATO sees "no sign whatsoever that President Putin is preparing for peace" and that arming Ukraine more quickly could save lives by bringing a quicker end to the conflict.

Russian forces shelled a dozen cities and villages in the Donetsk region in the last 24 hours including in Druzhkivka where a missile hit a hospital and in Pokrovsk where shelling damaged seven houses and a kindergarten.

"The shelling intensifies, and the Russians accumulate more forces for an attack on peaceful cities," Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said. "We're seeing a very tough battle in which the Russians aren't sparing neither themselves, nor us."

In the neighboring Luhansk region, Russian troops pulled back after several days of intense fighting near the key city of Kreminna, although they're not "running out of steam," Luhansk Gov. Serhii Haidai told Ukrainian television.

In the partially occupied southern region of Kherson, artillery fire hit more than 20 cities and villages over the past 24 hours including the regional capital of the same name which was recaptured by Ukrainian forces in November. Two men were killed in one of the villages when their car ran over a landmine.

In the neighboring Dnipropetrovsk region, Russian shelling of the city of Nikopol killed one person and wounded two others. The shelling also damaged a residential building, a water treatment facility and a college.

Meanwhile, the U.K. Defense Ministry said Russian forces are bolstering defensive fortifications on the edge of the battlefront in southern Ukraine to protect their flank, despite their focus on the Donbas region.

"This is demonstrated by continued construction of defensive fortifications in Zaporizhzhia and Luhansk oblasts and deployment of personnel," the Ministry said in a briefing Monday.

The U.S. embassy in Moscow issued another warning to U.S. citizens not to travel to Russia for fear of harassment or detention, urged them to leave immediately if they have to travel there.

The warning cited "the potential for harassment and the singling out of U.S. citizens for detention by Russian government security officials, the arbitrary enforcement of local law, limited flights into and out of Russia, the Embassy's limited ability to assist U.S. citizens in Russia, and the possibility of terrorism."

Newborn saved from rubble in quake-hit Syria in good health

BEIRUT (AP)—A baby girl born under the rubble of her family's home in northern Syria after last week's devastating earthquake was in good health Monday and being breast-fed by the wife of the director of the hospital where she is being cared for, her doctor said.

The infant, named Aya —Arabic for "a sign from God"—by hospital workers, may be able to leave the hospital as soon as Tuesday or Wednesday, according to her great-uncle, Saleh al-Badran. He said the baby's paternal aunt, who recently gave birth and survived the quake, will raise her.

The newborn's mother died after giving birth to her in the aftermath of the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria. Her father and four siblings were also killed in the quake.

Dr. Hani Maarouf, a pediatrician at Cihan Hospital in the northern Syrian city of Afrin, told The Associated Press that the wife of the hospital's director has been breast-feeding the baby girl.

"We have stopped all the medicines that we were giving Aya and now she is being breast-fed when she needs," Maarouf said by telephone from Afrin.

Maarouf said local policemen were standing guard at the hospital to make sure that no one tries to kidnap the child after a series of people showed up falsely claiming to be her relatives.

Rescue workers in the northern Syrian town of Jinderis discovered the dark-haired baby girl more than 10 hours after the Feb. 6 quake hit, as they were digging through the wreckage of the five-story apartment building where her parents lived.

Buried under the concrete, the baby still was connected by her umbilical cord to her mother, Afraa Abu Hadiya. The baby was rushed to the hospital in nearby Afrin where she has been cared for since.

The devastating quake followed by a series of tremors that struck southeastern Turkey and northern Syria reduced much of the towns and cities inhabited by millions to fragments of concrete and twisted metal. More than 35,000 people were killed, a toll expected to rise considerably as search teams find more bodies.

The earthquake destroyed dozens of housing units in the town of Jinderis where Aya's family had been living since 2018.

Aya's father, Abdullah Turki Mleihan, was originally from the village of Khsham in eastern Deir el-Zour province, but left in 2014 after the Islamic State group captured their village, said al-Badran, an uncle of Aya's father.

Good Housekeeping

What's hot in hardware

HO
A sideboard features brass hardware. (Handout/TNS)

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

Have a cabinet, dresser or console that needs a quick refresh? Looking to remodel your kitchen or bathroom and want to know what the latest and hottest trends in hardware are?

Some clear trends are emerging from national companies and local artisans. Here are our top 10:

1. Quality

No longer is the rush toward cheap and poorly made hardware. Manufacturers are opting for high-quality pieces that provide longevity and value for customers.

2. Modern lines

Design-forward brands are opting for modern and minimal, as opposed to fussy and ornate selections.

3. Color and classic

While classic finishes still dominate, for those who may want a pop of color, brands are bringing in colorful options.

4. Two tone

While solid finishes in common elements such as chrome, nickel and brass hardware remain popular, many brands are also offering two-tone (two-finish) options.

5. Matte black

Black is in. Black has become a popular finish in hardware in a design category traditionally dominated by chrome, nickel and brass.

6. Weight

Heavy and high quality is more the norm in today's popular hardware, as opposed to thin or lightweight options.

7. Styles in a series

Want the same look in your cabinets repeated in your door? Many brands are offering hardware in a variety of options.

8. Commercial-style hardware for residential use

These days, large, heavy handles or industrial-style hardware are easily translated to residential use.

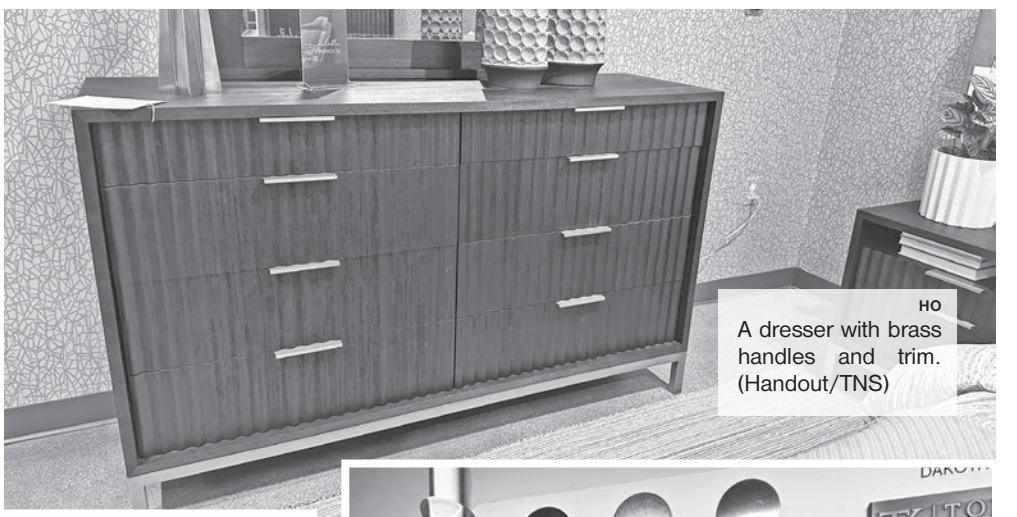
9. Cabinet manufacturers offering their own hardware

While this trend isn't new, more and more cabinet manufacturers are including the option of their own hardware to ensure design consistency.

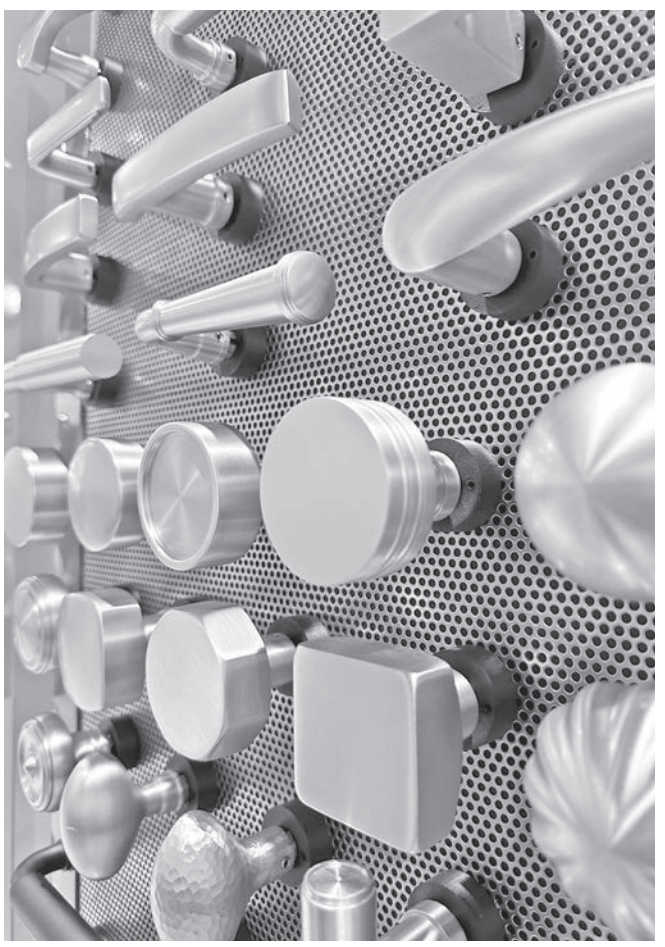
10. Style and substance

Design hardware is used more often than ever as a finishing touch or an essential aesthetic.

HO
A classic sideboard featuring brass handle hardware. (Handout/TNS)



HO
A dresser with brass handles and trim. (Handout/TNS)



HO
Brass, brass and more brass hardware. (Handout/TNS)

HO
Knurled hardware handles are part of the current hardware trend. (Handout/TNS)

HO
Hardware in various finishes. (Handout/TNS)

Life & Style

Experts found Chilean poet Neruda was poisoned, nephew says

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)—Forensic experts have determined that Chilean poet Pablo Neruda died of poisoning nearly 50 years ago, a family member of the Nobel Prize winner said Monday.

The revelation by Rodolfo Reyes, a Neruda nephew, is the latest turn in one of the great debates of post-coup Chile. The long-stated official position has been that Neruda died of complications from prostate cancer, but the poet's driver argued for decades that he was poisoned.

There was no confirmation of Reyes' comments from forensic experts from Canada, Denmark and Chile who are scheduled to publicly release a report Wednesday on the cause of Neruda's death.

The public release of the group's finding has been delayed twice this year, first due to internet connectivity issues of one of the experts and then again because a judge said the panel had yet to reach a consensus.

International forensics experts several years ago rejected the official cause of death as cachexia, or weakness and wasting of the body due to chronic illness—in this case cancer. But at that time they said they had not determined what did kill Neruda.

Neruda

In an interview with The Associated Press, Reyes said forensic tests carried out in Danish and Canadian labs indicated a presence of "a great quantity of Cloristridium botulinum, which is incompatible with human life." The powerful toxin can cause paralysis in the nervous system and death.

Reyes first revealed the information to the Spanish news agency EFE earlier Monday.

As a lawyer in the judicial case over his uncle's death, Reyes said he has access to the forensic report, which was carried out after the same group of experts said in 2017 that there were indications of a toxin in the late poet's bones and a molar.

The lab tests concluded that the toxin was administered when the poet was alive, Reyes said.

The report is set to be released almost 50 years after the death of the poet and Communist Party member and 12 years after the start of a judicial investigation into whether he was poisoned, as his driver Manuel Araya maintains.

Araya told AP earlier this month he was confident that the forensic findings would support his assertion the poet died after being given "an injection in the stomach" at the clinic where he was hospitalized. Araya said he first heard that version of events from a nurse.

Oscars response to Smith slap inadequate, academy head says

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—The slap sat front and center at Monday's Oscar nominees luncheon.

So much so that motion picture academy president Janet Yang neither had to describe it nor say the names Will Smith or Chris Rock for the ballroom full of award hopefuls to know what she was talking about when she aired her regrets.

"I'm sure you all remember we experienced an unprecedented event at the Oscars," Yang told a crowd that included Tom Cruise, Angela Bassett, Cate Blanchett and Steven Spielberg during her opening remarks. "What happened onstage was wholly unacceptable and the response from our organization was inadequate."

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences did little in response to Smith storming the stage and slapping Rock during last year's Oscars telecast or in the immediate aftermath. It was nearly two weeks before its board of governors voted to ban Smith from the Oscars and all other academy events for 10 years. Smith had already preemptively resigned as an academy member.

"We learned from this that the academy must be fully transparent and accountable in our actions," Yang said, "and particularly in times of crisis you must act swiftly, compassionately and decisively for ourselves and for our industry. You should and can expect no less form us going forward."

Yang, who was not president at the time, was interrupted by a mild round of applause, and did not elaborate further, moving on to happier topics.

Super Bowl averages 113 million, 3rd most-watched in history

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

Fox was hoping the matchup of two top teams in the Super Bowl and a close game would lead to a record night.

Even though Sunday's game between the Kansas City Chiefs and Philadelphia Eagles came down to a field goal with 8 seconds remaining, Fox fell just short of its goal.

The Chiefs' rally to defeat the Eagles 38-35 is on pace to become the third most-watched television show in history, with an estimated 113 million people watching, according to preliminary numbers released Monday.

Fox said the audience estimate includes the broadcasts on Fox and Fox Deportes as well as streaming on Fox and the NFL's digital sites. The figures are via Nielsen's Fast National data and Adobe Analytics.

The 2015 game between New England and Seattle on NBC holds the record at 114,442,000 viewers (not including streaming), followed by Super Bowl 51 in 2017 on Fox between Atlanta and New England (113,668,000).

This was Fox's 10th Super Bowl since it began airing NFL games in 1994 and the second most-watched program in Fox Sports history.

It would also be a slight increase over the 112.3 million average for last year's Super Bowl. The Los Angeles Rams' victory over the Cincinnati Bengals was broadcast by NBC and Telemundo and streamed on Peacock and NFL digital sites.

German ballet director suspended

BERLIN (AP)—A German newspaper critic had animal feces smeared on her face in the city of Hannover by a ballet director who apparently took offense at a review she wrote.

The Hannover state opera house apologized for the incident and said Monday that it was suspending ballet director Marco Goecke with immediate effect.

The daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported that a furious Goecke approached its dance critic, Wiebke Huester, during the interval of a premiere at Hannover's opera house on Saturday and asked what she was doing there. It said that the two didn't know each other personally.

The newspaper said that Goecke, who apparently felt provoked by a recent review she wrote of a production he staged in the Dutch seat of government, The Hague, threatened to ban her from the ballet and accused her of being responsible for people canceling season tickets in Hannover.

He then pulled out a paper bag with animal feces and smeared her face with the contents before making off through a packed theater foyer, the newspaper said. Huester identified the substance as dog feces and said she had filed a criminal complaint, German news agency dpa reported.

In a statement on its website, the opera house said Huester's "personal integrity" was violated "in an unspeakable way." It said that it contacted her immediately after the incident to apologize.

The opera house said that Goecke's "impulsive reaction" violated the ground rules of the theater and that "he caused massive damage to the Hannover State Opera and State Ballet." As a result, it said, he is being suspended and banned from the opera house until further notice.

Goecke has been given the next few days to apologize "comprehensively" and explain himself to theater management "before further steps are announced," it added.

The ballet director appeared at least partly unrepentant, however. In an interview with public broadcaster NDR, Goecke acknowledged that his "choice of means wasn't super, absolutely."

"Of course socially that is also certainly not recognized or respected, if one resorts to such means," he said of the attack, adding that he had never done anything like that before and was "a bit shocked at myself."

Friend's frisky husband makes his desires clear

DEAR ABBY: My married friend is a swinger. She says her husband's sex drive has declined lately, but it hasn't. He keeps trying to get me to talk "naughty" with him, but I always refuse. To me, that would be betraying my friend. He has encouraged her to get a live-in girlfriend for herself. I asked her what she thinks would happen if she did and he decided to do the same. She doesn't believe he would, but I do.

Abby, I value our friendship. If I tell her about his late-night habits, it would hurt her. If I don't and she finds out, it will also hurt her. He always apologizes after each attempt. Apologies mean nothing if he continues to repeat his actions. Lately, I have avoided spending time with her because of his late-night requests. What should I do?

TURNED OFF IN THE SOUTH

DEAR TURNED OFF: Tell him his advances are not welcome and to stop calling you, and that if he doesn't, you will tell your friend. If he persists, inform your friend how long this has been going on and that you have been reluctant to tell her, but it has reached the point that it is making you not want to be around her either. After that, the ball will be in her court.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My adult son is married with a newborn son. I recently learned that he is the victim of spousal abuse. He was keeping it a secret from us, but we found out when authorities became involved. My son loves his wife and wants to make it work. I have no idea how to navigate holidays and special occasions when we will see them. Knowing your adult son is being harmed by his wife, how would you interact with this woman?

UNEASY IN ARIZONA

DEAR UNEASY: Be glad that the fact your daughter-in-law is a spousal abuser is now on record. Before the next holidays, you and your husband should have a talk with your son about why he has tolerated the abuse and WHAT HIS OPTIONS ARE. Is she so out of control that she could hurt the baby in a fit of rage? Are they receiving counseling? Has he spoken to an attorney about this?

A support group your son would find helpful is Stop Abuse for Everyone (stopabuseforeveryone.org). Once he gets in touch, he will realize that he's far from the only husband who has been battered. He also needs to know you are there for him regardless, so when the holidays roll around, be "cordial"—and keep your eyes open.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I have two friends whose daughters will be married this fall, both for the second time. I have given gifts to both women for their first marriages. What is the rule of etiquette for the second time around?

WANTS TO KNOW IN MONTANA

DEAR WANTS: If you plan to attend the weddings, the rule is to give something less expensive this time around, along with your good wishes for a happy future.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

I'M MAKING A MONUMENTAL, HEROIC SNOW SCULPTURE.
IT WILL BE CALLED "THE TRIUMPH OF PERSEVERANCE."
VERY INSPIRING. WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?
THIS.
YOU'RE THROUGH?
I'M BORED.
2-15

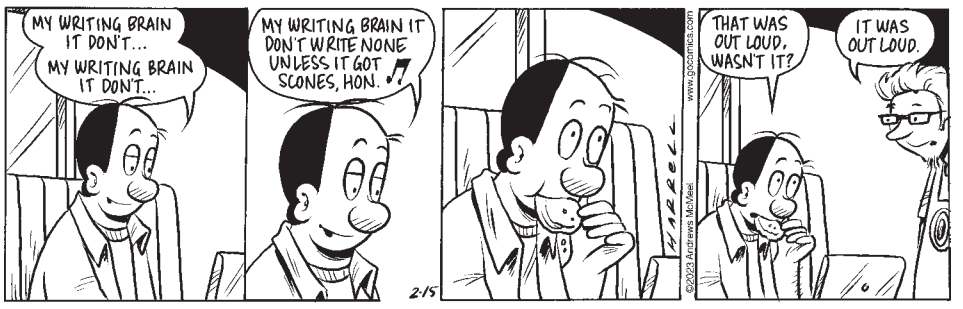
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!
BARK! BARK! BERK!..... COUGH!
THAT'S IT. I'M NOT GETTING MY 10,000 BARKS IN TODAY
THE NEIGHBORS THANK YOU
JIM DAVIS 2-15

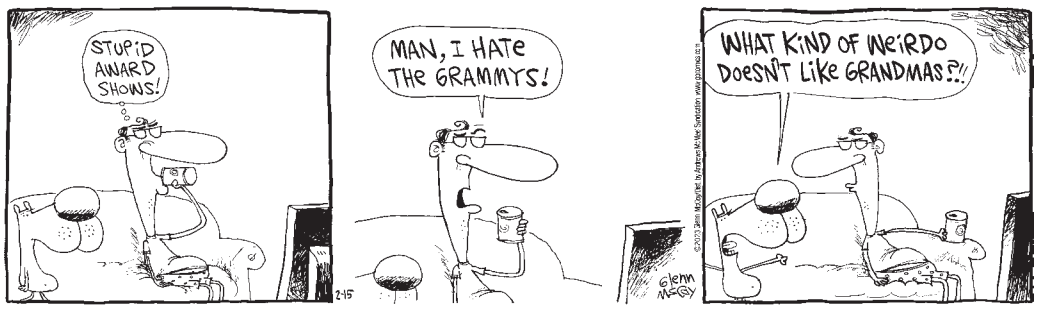
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


MY WRITING BRAIN IT DON'T...
MY WRITING BRAIN IT DON'T...
MY WRITING BRAIN IT DON'T WRITE NONE UNLESS IT GOT SCONES, HON.
THAT WAS OUT LOUD, WASN'T IT?
IT WAS OUT LOUD.
2-15

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Young Franken-stein" role
5 Crater edge
8 Writer Kingsley
12 Only
13 Yale grad
14 React in horror
15 Facial treat-ments
17 Sofa brand
18 TV detec-tive Rem-ington
19 Lustrous fabric
21 Young bloke
22 Pro votes
23 — Kippur
26 PBS supporter
28 March honoree, for short
31 Art colony in New Mexico
33 24 horas
35 Jug handles
36 Celtic priest
38 AOL rival
40 Shred
41 Belgrade resident
43 Short trip
45 Black Sea port
47 Ruling periods
51 Sobbed
52 Making lunches for the week, say
54 Final Four org.
55 Vagrant
56 Bosc, for one
57 Freshens the lawn, say
58 Apr. check casher
59 Wrong

DOWN

1 Doctrines
2 Toe malady
3 Shoppe descrip-tion
4 Drive away
5 Ebbed
6 Sort
7 Singer Elliott
8 Stir up
9 Does well, golf-wise
10 "Under-stood"
11 Bridge
16 Arkin or Alda
20 DDE's opponent
23 Since Jan. 1
24 Rowing need
25 Computer acces-sory
27 Goal
29 MSNBC's Melber
30 Recipe abbr.
32 Naps
34 Hindu retreats
37 ER workers
39 Yuletide tune
42 Disney deer
44 Kate Mid-dleton's sister
45 Has
46 1920s art style
48 Mush-roomed
49 Close
50 Agile
53 Continent north of Afr.

Solution time: 23 mins.

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R	O	A	R	■	B	I	N	■	U	R	S	A
L	O	V	E	S	O	N	G	■	E	L	E	V
O	R	E	■	L	A	G	■	A	S	S	A	Y
■	■	■	L	O	T	■	T	N	T	■	■	■
A	S	C	O	T	■	B	I	O	L	O	G	Y
L	I	E	V	■	W	O	O	■	O	B	O	E
T	R	E	E	T	O	P	■	E	V	I	T	A
■	■	■	B	O	W	■	R	A	E	■	■	■
D	E	N	I	M	■	M	A	C	■	F	A	B
O	D	O	R	■	W	I	T	H	L	O	V	E
E	G	A	D	■	A	C	E	■	E	R	I	E
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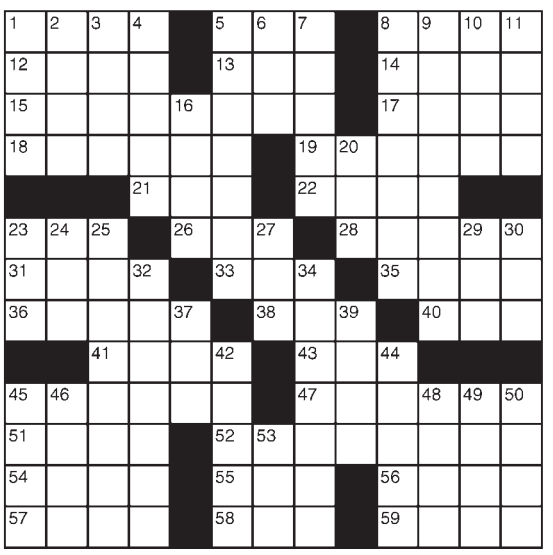
Yesterday's answer 2-15



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Amber Riley, 37; Matt Groening, 69; Melissa Manchester, 72; Jane Seymour, 72.

Happy Birthday: Reach out to the person who brings out the best in you. Placing the right people in your corner will make a difference in the outcome. Consider what you want to accomplish and where to execute your plans. Joint ventures will help you pick up the pace and achieve the most. Emotions will run high this year, especially concerning shared expenses and moneymaking. Your numbers are 5, 8, 19, 24, 32, 37, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Look at what's possible and plan your strategy. Learn from the past, and don't count on others to live up to their promises. Rely on your intelligence, skills and ability to go the distance. You will come out on top. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Pick up the slack and do your best. No need to get worked up over something you cannot change. Focus on what's tangible. Put everything in order and prepare to initiate plans. Don't let anyone slow you down or take over. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Put yourself on the line, show everyone what you can do and look for ways to market your offer. Concentrate on what's meaningful to you. Prepare for your success instead of helping everyone else reach their goals. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't overthink matters; you will achieve your objective without interruption. Simplicity is the key to getting where you want to go with the least amount of interference. Be direct regarding love. Don't let anyone manipulate you. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Handle people with fragile egos mindfully. Be on your best behavior and offer compliments. Your input will impact you, and the result will be the respect and help you receive in return. Pay it forward, and you will reap the rewards. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Put your differences aside and compromise. Choose peace over chaos, and strive to bring out the best in others. Don't hide your thoughts and feelings. Speak up, find out where you stand and make decisions that help you establish the lifestyle you desire. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Travel plans, attending a conference or spending quality time with someone who shares your interests will broaden your awareness and help you recognize how to use your skills, knowledge and experience to make a difference. A meaningful pursuit will gather momentum. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Follow the most exciting path. Having an outlet to hone your skills and pursue a career you enjoy will increase your awareness of what's possible. Discipline and hard work will pay off. Partner with someone who shares your goal. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Don't expect things to run smoothly. Emotional confusion will surface due to a gesture someone makes. Look for a unique way to solve problems. Use physical fitness or a self-improvement project to ease stress. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take a leadership position and ask questions. You'll find a way to use your energy, discipline and speed to prosper. Utilize what others have already perfected and whatever else they can offer to your benefit. Put time aside for pleasure. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* A budget-friendly plan will ease stress and help you meet your demands. Don't let what others decide to do influence or cost you. By puttering around the house, you'll find the perfect spot to clear and start a new project. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Consider long-term effects before moving. Educate yourself, talk to experts and keep your emotions out of your final decision. Be sure to update documents that are about to expire to avoid a penalty. A romantic gesture will have emotional implications. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are responsive, playful and accepting. You are reliable and helpful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1	4			7	8		
				9	8		3	4
9		6					2	
		9			4		7	
	4					6		
		2		8				3
		8		4	3			7
4				5		9		8
5		7		6				

Difficulty: ★★★ 2-15

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

3	6	5	8	1	7	9	4	2
7	8	1	9	2	4	6	3	5
4	9	2	6	5	3	8	7	1
9	2	4	5	3	6	1	8	7
6	5	3	1	7	8	2	9	4
8	1	7	2	4	9	5	6	3
5	3	6	7	8	1	4	2	9
1	7	8	4	9	2	3	5	6
2	4	9	3	6	5	7	1	8

Difficulty: ★★ 2-14

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

BLISSFULNESS **Solution: 9 letters**

G	A	B	G	E	R	U	T	A	N	T	R	I	P	T
Y	N	O	M	R	A	H	P	R	Ⓐ	E	D	E	H	H
O	N	I	L	E	A	A	E	Ⓟ	A	R	K	C	I	G
J	I	O	K	C	R	T	Ⓢ	D	E	N	A	I	K	I
N	V	E	M	A	R	R	I	A	G	E	Q	N	E	L
E	E	C	D	E	T	E	M	T	B	L	H	U	U	E
S	R	I	A	P	R	H	L	E	U	G	E	F	I	D
T	S	T	S	L	O	E	T	A	U	D	R	H	Y	L
E	A	S	K	A	M	O	C	A	X	E	E	S	A	G
S	R	J	O	Y	F	U	L	L	E	A	S	P	D	A
N	Y	S	O	F	H	G	I	H	R	R	T	R	I	R
U	P	I	B	U	N	F	C	T	B	S	B	I	L	D
S	P	C	E	L	E	B	R	A	T	I	O	N	O	E
V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	A	K	N	G	G	H	N
T	H	R	I	L	L	D	R	E	S	G	L	A	D	S

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Anniversary, Band, Beach, Bike, Books, Breathtaking, Calm, Celebration, Ceremony, Cheerful, Date, Delight, Dream, Enjoy, Gardens, Glad, Gratitude, Happy, Harmony, Heart, High, Hike, Holiday, Joyful, Laugh, Life, Love, Marriage, Nature, Nice, Paradise, Park, Peace, Playful, Pool, Read, Relaxation, Rest, Retreat, Seek, Sing, Spa, Spring, Star, Sunset, Thrill, Tranquil, Trip, Vacation

Yesterday's Answer: Balanced

The NEW **Volume 70** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

T-wolves outlast Mavs 124-121 despite 26-point 4th by Irving

DALLAS (AP)—Kyrie Irving scored 26 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter in his home debut for Dallas as he tried to rally the Mavericks from a 26-point deficit, but the Minnesota Timberwolves held on for a 124-121 victory on Monday night.

Irving had the highest-scoring fourth quarter of his career. But he made a bad pass after stepping inside the 3-point line on the final possession when Dallas had a chance to tie the game. He had exchanged passes with All-Star teammate Luka Doncic, who finished with 33 points.

Irving and Doncic fell to 0-2 while playing together. Irving has played four games overall for Dallas since being acquired from Brooklyn in a trade.

First-time All-Star guard Anthony Edwards scored 32 points and Rudy Gobert had 21 points and 14 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who had their biggest lead at 89-63 on a long step-back jumper by Edwards midway through the third quarter.

Gobert was 9 of 9 from the field, and Jaden McDaniels was 7 of 8 while scoring 19 points.

AP

Dallas Mavericks' Kyrie Irving (2) celebrates in the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Minnesota Timberwolves, Monday, Feb. 13, 2023, in Dallas.

NUGGETS 112, HEAT 108

MIAMI (AP)—Nikola Jokic finished with 27 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists, and Denver snapped Miami's eight-game home winning streak.

Jokic made 12 of 14 shots, and Denver shot 58%.

Michael Porter Jr. scored 17, Bruce Brown added 16, Jeff Green scored 12 and three Nuggets—Vlatko Cancar, Christian Braun and Thomas Bryant—each finished with 10 points.

Jimmy Butler had 24 points, nine assists and eight rebounds for the Heat. Max Strus scored 23, Bam Adebayo had 19, Gabe Vincent 15 and Jamaree Bouyea added 10 for Miami.

KNICKS 124, NETS 106

NEW YORK (AP)—Jalen Brunson scored 40 points, Josh Hart added a season-high 27 in his second game with his new team and host New York snapped a nine-game losing streak against Brooklyn.

Julius Randle had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Knicks, who beat the Nets for the first time in three years. Brooklyn never lost to the Knicks when Kevin Durant or Kyrie Irving played.

More importantly for the seventh-place Knicks, they pulled within two games of the Nets for fifth place in the Eastern Conference.

Spencer Dinwiddie scored 28 points for the Nets, who showed again how much of a struggle scoring could be after trading their two All-Stars last week.

WARRIORS 135, WIZARDS 126

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Andrew Wiggins had 29 points and seven rebounds, Klay Thompson scored 27 points, and Golden State beat Washington.

JaMychal Green went 4 of 4 from deep and made all five of his field goals for 14 points to go with five assists. Donte DiVincenzo added 17 points off the bench, while Kevon Looney contributed 13 points and 13 rebounds as the Warriors snapped a two-game skid.

Kristaps Porzingis scored 34 points on 12-of-16 shooting for a Wizards team that had won 8 of 11 and five of its previous six road games. Bradley Beal added 33 points and topped 15,000 for his career.

TRAIL BLAZERS 127, LAKERS 115

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Damian Lillard had 40 points, including eight 3-pointers, to lead Portland past Los Angeles.

LeBron James missed his third straight game for the Lakers with a sore left ankle. He has not played since breaking Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's NBA scoring record last Tuesday in a loss to Oklahoma City.

The Blazers led by as many as 27 points and made a season-best 23 3-pointers, including a franchise-record 17 3s in the first half.

Anthony Davis had 19 points and 20 rebounds for the Lakers, who have lost four of five.

HORNETS 144, HAWKS 138

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—LaMelo Ball had 30 points and 15 assists, Terry Rozier added 29 points and Charlotte held off Atlanta to snap a seven-game skid.

Gordon Hayward scored 26 points and P.J. Washington added 22 as the Hornets shot 63% from the field. Ball had six 3-pointers and Rozier hit five as Charlotte never trailed and tied a season high with 20 3s.

It was the second-highest point total in Hornets franchise history, behind the 158 they scored against Indiana last season.

Trae Young finished with 25 points and 14 assists for the Hawks, who had their two-game win streak snapped. Clint Capela added 22 points, DeAndre Hunter had 21 and Dejounte Murray scored 20.

CAVALIERS 117, SPURS 109

CLEVELAND (AP)—Donovan Mitchell scored 41 points and led Cleveland to its seventh straight win as nose-diving San Antonio matched a team record with its 13th consecutive loss.

Mitchell made five 3-pointers and scored 23 in the first half, helping the Cavs build an 18-point lead.

Jarrett Allen had 17 points and 11 rebounds as Cleveland improved to 25-6 at home. Evan Mobley had 15 points and 10 boards.

Keldon Johnson scored 25 points and rookie Malaki Branham 18 to pace the Spurs, who are 2-20 in 2023. The Spurs previously lost 13 straight during the 1988-89 season.

76ERS 123, ROCKETS 104

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—James Harden had 29 points and 10 assists against his former team while Tyrese Maxey scored 26 off the bench as Philadelphia beat Houston.

Joel Embiid scored 23 points in 31 minutes for the Sixers, who have won three in a row and improved to 22-8 at home.

Jalen Green scored 29 points for the Rockets, who have lost six straight to fall to a league-worst 13-44. KJ Martin added 15 for Houston.

PELICANS 103, THUNDER 100

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Brandon Ingram scored 34 points and New Orleans outlasted Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City had a chance to tie in the closing seconds, but Isaiah Joe's 3-pointer bounced away at the buzzer.

Ingram carried the scoring load for the Pelicans while guard CJ McCollum sat out with a sprained right ankle.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 24 points and 10 rebounds, Jalen Williams scored 22 points and Joe added 16 for the Thunder.

JAZZ 123, PACERS 117

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Jordan Clarkson and Lauri Markkanen each scored 29 points and Utah beat Indiana.

Clarkson hit a 3-pointer for a 115-110 lead with 2:03 remaining, and added a 13-foot baseline jumper to extend the lead to 117-113 in the final minute. Markkanen hit 10 of 18 shots and had 11 rebounds for the Jazz, who had lost four of their last five games.

Tyrese Haliburton had 29 points and 12 assists and Bennedict Mathurin scored 21 for the Pacers, whose skid reached five games.

MAGIC 100, BULLS 91

CHICAGO (AP)—Paolo Banchero scored 22 points, Franz Wagner and Markelle Fultz added 18 points apiece Orlando beat cold-shooting Chicago.

Fultz just missed a triple-double with 10 rebounds and nine assists. Wendell Carter Jr. scored 15 points against his former team as the Magic won for the fourth time in six games.

The Bulls matched a season high by dropping their fourth in a row. The missed their first 16 3-pointers and finished 18 of 21 from long range.

Zach LaVine led Chicago with 26 points, and DeMar DeRozan scored 19. Former Magic star Nikola Vucevic finished with 13 points and 13 rebounds.

Warriors guard Payton II to be sidelined at least a month

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Newly acquired Golden State guard Gary Payton II will be out for at least a month as he fully recovers from offseason surgery for a core muscle injury, and Warriors general manager Bob Myers is awaiting a decision from the NBA on whether the Trail Blazers withheld anything on Payton's health before trading him.

"What do I want? Whatever the NBA says is fair, just whatever that is," Myers said Monday of receiving any potential compensation from Portland. "I just want a fair result. I don't know, whatever it takes it takes, I don't know how long."

Myers is hopeful the defensive guard could return before the playoffs. Payton is listed on the injury report with right adductor soreness, stemming from the abdominal area—and there were no further details on whether that means the high-flying Payton's right leg is also compromised.

"Gary's going to be out. We're going to evaluate him in a month. It is our determination he's not ready to play right now," Myers said.

Myers wouldn't address any issues the Warriors had with how Portland handled the trade or whether they failed to share any details on Payton's health, citing legal constraints and medical privacy. Golden State did bring concerns about the process to the league before deciding Sunday to go through with the four-team swap that sent center James Wiseman to the Pistons.

Myers said the team evaluated all options, including perhaps rescinding the trade altogether.

"We had the time we had to make a decision, so it was just more thinking about it," Myers said. "Probably by Saturday night we had a sense of the direction we going in."

While the defending champions were hopeful of having Payton play immediately, Myers still believes in the move over the long haul. Payton signed a $28 million, three-year contract with the Trail Blazers.

"We still think it's helpful. We just have to wait till he gets healthy," Myers said.

The 30-year-old Payton played against Golden State in a win Wednesday night at Portland before rejoining his former team ahead of the trade deadline a day later. Payton is averaging 4.1 points, 2.6 rebounds and 1.5 assists over 15 games.

"As far as Gary what he does for us I think you all know, you've seen what he does for us," Myers said. "We're trying to help give this team a boost, near term, long term."

Myers added that it was difficult to part with Wiseman, the second overall pick in 2020 out of Memphis who missed all of last season while recovering from right knee surgery he had late in his rookie season. The Warriors didn't envision him making an impact this season if they were to have kept him and opted out of the trade — and Myers said he will be rooting for Wiseman's success and opportunities in Detroit.

"He is a great kid and did everything we asked him to do, on time, worked hard, great attitude whether he was playing or not, G League and back and forth," Myers said. "So it was a tough thing to do to move someone that we like that much as a person. I know that it's a business."

Super Bowl-winning combo will be leading Chiefs into future

PHOENIX (AP)—Andy Reid posed with the Lombardi Trophy as he took the stage the morning after his second Super Bowl win and simply said: "It never gets old standing right here."

As long as Reid is dialing up plays and Patrick Mahomes is executing them, the Kansas City Chiefs will be in contention to get right back into this spot.

The duo— an innovative play-caller and a young quarterback whose achievements already rival some of the game's greatest ever—won their second Super Bowl together in the past four seasons when Kansas City beat the Philadelphia Eagles 38-35 on Sunday.

"As long as Andy Reid is coaching us, we'll always have a chance," Mahomes said Monday at a news conference honoring the Super Bowl winning coach and MVP. "I'll keep the big guy around a couple more years at least and we'll try to be back at this game as many times as possible."

Since Mahomes became the starter in Kansas City in 2018, the Chiefs have made it to the AFC championship game every season, the Super Bowl three times and won it twice.

This title might have been even sweeter than the first following the 2019 season as Mahomes overcame a high ankle sprain that limited him in the playoffs and quieted the skeptics who doubted whether he could have the same kind of success after the Chiefs traded away game-breaking wide receiver Tyreek Hill.

But with a strong offensive line that held the Eagles' vaunted pass rush to no sacks, All-Pro tight end Travis Kelce and a cast of mostly young receivers who stepped up in the Super Bowl, the Chiefs still had the league's top offense thanks mostly to the combo of Reid and Mahomes.

AP

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes, left, holds up the Super Bowl MVP Trophy as he stands next to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell during an NFL Super Bowl football news conference in Phoenix, Monday, Feb. 13, 2023.

"It's hard not to hear that stuff, especially in today's age and social media and everything like that," Mahomes said. "You hear how not good we're going to be. All you can do is prove it on the football field. I'm not a guy that's going to respond and say stuff back to people. I'm just going to go out there and prove it on the football field. Once you do that, there's nothing they can really say."

All that's left to ask about Mahomes after a week in which he won his second regular-season MVP award and second Super Bowl MVP is where he will eventually rank among the game's greatest quarterbacks.

Mahomes is already on a pace no one else has set.

He joined Hall of Famer Joe Montana and Tom Brady —considered by many the best quarterbacks in the Super Bowl era—as the only players ever to win multiple MVP awards in the regular season and Super Bowl.

Mahomes did it in his sixth season, while it took Brady 11 years and Montana 12 until they accomplished the feat.

Mahomes became the seventh player to win the NFL regular season MVP and Super Bowl MVP in the same season—with the first six already enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The Super Bowl win by Mahomes also broke some hexes as he became the first MVP to win the title since Kurt Warner in the 1999 season and the first player ever to lead the league in yards passing and win the Super Bowl in the same season.

The decision to trade Hill has set the Chiefs up well as they head into the offseason in good shape on the salary cap, with 12 projected draft picks, and a strong rookie class from 2022 that only should improve.

But most importantly, they have the coach and quarterback, with the 64-year-old Reid pointing to Mahomes when he said he has no plans to step down any time in the near future.

"I'm enjoying what I'm doing," Reid said. "I have this guy over here who is a pretty good player, so I'm doing OK."

Chiefs' Travis Kelce tops big brother on Super Bowl stage

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)—Travis Kelce finished off what he called the best year of his life with a second Super Bowl title.

This one came at the expense of his big brother.

The Chiefs tight end hauled in six catches for a team-leading 81 yards and a touchdown Sunday night, helping Kansas City rally from a 10-point halftime hole to beat Jason Kelce and the Philadelphia Eagles 38-35 at State Farm Stadium.

"I got closer to my brother. Got to meet him at the mountaintop," the younger Kelce said. "Best feeling in the world."

Travis Kelce got emotional when he began talking about his mother, Donna Kelce, who became a star in her own right during Super Bowl week. She was featured during pregame wearing a custom outfit that was half Chiefs and half Eagles, along with a pair of shoes with Jason Kelce's number on the right and Travis Kelce's number on the left, earrings representing each team and a tote bag that had both her sons' numbers and "Mama Kelce" on it.

She was clearly playing no favorites on Sunday night.

There could be only one winner, though.

Jason Kelce did all he could to help the Eagles add another Lombardi Trophy to the one he won in 2018. The burly center paved the way for Jalen Hurts to throw for 304 yards and a touchdown while running for 70 yards and three more scores, and he helped the Eagles drive downfield in the fourth quarter for a tying touchdown and 2-point conversion.

The Chiefs still had time in a 35-all game for his All-Pro little brother and Patrick Mahomes to go to work.

With about three minutes to go, the two connected for a nice completion early in the drive, helping Kansas City into rhythm as it drove for a go-ahead score. The Chiefs eventually moved near the Philadelphia goal line, aided by a questionable penalty for defensive holding, before Harrison Butker drilled a 27-yard field goal with 8 seconds to go.

The Eagles threw incomplete on the game's final play as Travis Kelce and the Chiefs raced off the sideline to celebrate.

Then, old No. 87 tried to find his big brother amid the showering confetti.

"In a situation like that, there's not a lot you can say to a loved one," Travis Kelce said, tearing up. "You joke around all the time and say that you want to beat your brother on the biggest stage ever, but it's a weird feeling.

"There's nothing really I could say to him, other than I love him and he played a hell of a year, a hell of a season."

Jalen Hurts' brilliant Super Bowl effort falls short

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)—Whether it was through the air or on the ground, Jalen Hurts dominated the Super Bowl offensively for the Philadelphia Eagles.

It just wasn't enough to outduel Patrick Mahomes.

Hurts delivered a record performance on football's biggest stage, throwing for 304 yards and a touchdown, running for 70 yards and three scores and adding a game-tying 2-point conversion.

But Hurts could only watch from the sideline as Mahomes drove the Chiefs to the go-ahead field goal with 8 seconds remaining for a 38-35 victory on Sunday.

"It's tough," Hurts said. "We worked really hard to have this opportunity and to come up short it's tough. There's always a lot to learn from, to have an opportunity to reflect on some of the things we didn't do and could have done. There is a lot to learn from tonight."

Despite ending up with the loss, Hurts put together one of the most prolific games in Super Bowl history, but became the first QB ever to lose the big game while leading his team to at least 35 points.

He set the record for most yards rushing ever by a quarterback in a Super Bowl, he tied Terrell Davis' record for most TD runs by any player, tied James White's mark with 20 points scored and joined Hall of Famers Steve Young and Joe Montana as the only players ever to account for at least 370 yards and four TDs (rushing and passing) in a Super Bowl.

"Jalen played the best game I've seen him play and in the two years we've been together," coach Nick Sirianni said. "He was outstanding. I really thought he was in complete control and he did things with his legs in the run game, he did things with his arm in the pass game, made some unbelievable throws, unbelievable reads. I thought he played outstanding."

But the breakthrough season that ended with Hurts as the runner-up to Mahomes in the MVP voting also led him to be runner-up in the Super Bowl as Hurts became the first player to lose a Super Bowl despite accounting for four touchdowns.

Hurts started the game fast and never slowed down — but couldn't get a chance to win it at the end thanks to a defensive holding call against James Bradberry that gave the Chiefs a first down in field-goal range and helped them run out almost the entire clock.

Hurts had one last chance and his desperation pass fell way short and he waked off the field in dejection.

It was a crushing way to end a brilliant performance.

"Jalen played a hell of a game," center Jason Kelce said. "On ground through the air. He made obviously some huge throws. Both offenses came ready to go. It was kind of one of those things where probably whoever had the ball last was going to be in a good situation. We knew if we gave it back with five minutes (remaining), you're hoping somebody makes a play. But that's a tough task. Patrick Mahomes is MVP for a reason."

Hurts scored on one of his patented sneaks on the opening drive, delivered a 45-yard scoring strike to A.J. Brown on the first play of the second quarter, added a 4-yard run late in the second quarter and then engineered a signature drive in the fourth quarter.

He connected on a 45-yard pass to DeVonta Smith and then capped off the drive with a 2-yard run. He then ran it in himself for the game-tying 2-point conversion but was mostly a spectator after that.

"That was a special performance that I don't want to get lost because of the loss they had," Mahomes said.

Nakama beats IHT to remain unscathed

Team Nakama remains the only defeated Roccball team after Round 5 of competition at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Nakama players stayed undefeated by outscoring I Hit That, 52-19.

In that game Nakama scored 12 2-point aces, two 2-point xunks, and one 3-point goal for a total of 29 multiple scoring points in addition to volleyball's antiquated 1-point per play scoring technique.

Teams Tomodachi and Lotus are tied for second place with four wins and one loss each. Tomodachi defeated Dusty Feetz, 44-33, and team Lotus defeated Phan Gotte, 40-14. In the last game of Round 5, Sufa defeated the Bandits, 34-20.

Tomodachi is the team with the best multiple point scoring statistics after five rounds of competition, The players of Tomodachi have scored a total of 16 goals, 45 aces, two xunks, and 5five kees for a total of 143 points not counting how many times they scored a court point.

Roccball's heavy hitters after Round 5 of competition were Mokwon Kim of Nakama who has scored 12 aces, two xunks, and six goals. For the girls, it was Direnalyn Castro of Dusty Feetz with seven aces and a xunk. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Round 5 of the 2023 Roccball season continued last week at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Register now for NMC's upcoming Golf Open

With only a month left before the tournament, the Northern Marianas College Foundation is encouraging all golfers to register for the foundation's upcoming Golf Open on March 18 and 19, 2023.

For the first time, NMC's tournament will be a two-day event and will be held on the east and west courses of the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort. The tournament fee for the open is $250 per player. First place winners in the Men's Championship, A, B, C, Senior, and Ladies flights will each receive $500. Second place finishers will receive $300 and third place finishers will receive $200.

NMC

The Northern Marianas College Foundation's Golf Open will feature thousands of dollars in amazing hole-in-one prizes.

This year's tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing hole-in-one prizes, such as a $10,000 shopping spree at Top Shelf Wine and Spirits, $10,000 from Ambyth Shipping and Seafix Inc., $5,000 from Pacifica Insurance, $5,000 from McDonald's of Saipan, a YETI cooler from Boarderline, and vehicles from Atkins Kroll Saipan and Triple J Motors.

The tournament, which is the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds for the college for its rebuilding and reconstruction efforts. Despite the devastation and destruction of super typhoons Soudelor and Yutu, the college has been aggressively seeking funds from all available sources to rebuild classrooms, offices, labs, and workforce spaces for the CNMI community. The college is seeking the CNMI private sector's support through fundraising events like the golf tournament.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting NMC Foundation Coordinator Carla Sablan at carla.sablan@marianas.edu or (670) 237-6780.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram (nmc.proa) or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

Last weightlifting qualifier set for March 25

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The CNMI Weightlifting Federation will host its last weightlifting qualifier, the Marianas Cup 2023 on March 25 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

This year's Marianas Cup will have four divisions in the Olympic lifts of snatch and clean & jerk.

The divisions are: Youth ages 13 to 17-years-old; Junior, ages 15 to 20; Senior, 15 years and over; and Masters, 35-years-old and over.

The $30 athlete registration fee is due no later than Friday, March 1. No late registration will be accepted.

There is also a spectator fee of $10 for adults, and $5 for children 6 to 17 years old. Admission is free for kids 5 years old and under.

Weigh-in for women competitors will be held from 7am to 8am, while the weigh-in for men competitors will be held from 9:30am to 10:30am.

To be considered for the national weightlifting team for the upcoming July 2023 10th Micronesian Games in the Marshall Islands, or the November 2023 Pacific Mini Games in the Solomon Islands, each athlete would have to compete in two qualifying events.

LEIGH GASES

Raymond Olopai attempts a snatch lift during the first weightlifting qualifier last Jan. 7 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Last Jan. 7, 20 weightlifters took the platform and threw weights for the first CNMI Weightlifting National Team qualifier.

A total of 10 male and 10 female joined in either the youth, junior, and senior divisions of the snatch and clean and jerk lifts. It was one of several qualifying events for selection of the 2023 CNMI Weightlifting National Team.

While it was considered one qualifying event, there were no medals or awards for the top in their weight class. The other qualifying event that athletes are able to join is the Guam weightlifting competition this February 25, and/or the next weightlifting qualifier in the CNMI in March.

Contact cnmiweightlifting@gmail.com for more information.

OES 1

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gorio T. Camacho Elementary School 1 defeated OES 2, 21-19; GTC 2 beat GCA 1, 21-15; and Kagman Elementary School won against GES 1, 21-16.

The other regular scheduled games were GCA 2 against SES, which the Eagles won, 21-17; TES won over SIS 1, 21-12; KobES beat SES, 22-20; GCA 2 defeated SCS, 21-19; KobES edged GCA 2, 21-9; and SES trumped SIS 1, 21-5.

In the standings, the Turtles 1 lead Pool C with 6 wins and 1 loss; KobES and TES are right behind with a 5-2 card; GCA 2 is at 4-3; SES and SVES 1 are both 3-4; and SCS and SIS 1 are at the bottom with 1-6.

Pool B is led by KobES 1 with 2 wins; GES 2 has a 2-1 record; GCA 1 is at 1-2; GTC 2 and WSR 1 both have 1 wins; and Brilliant Star School has 3 losses.

KES lead Pool A with 3 wins and no loss, followed by GES 1 with 3-1; WSR 2 has a 1-2 car; OES 2 is at 1-3; GTC 1 has a tied 1-1 record; and SIS 2 has no wins and 2 losses.

After Friday's games, Pool C has completed their round-robin pool play, with OES 1, TES, KobES 2, and GCA 2 advancing to the double-elimination championship tournament scheduled for Feb. 24 and 25.

Pool A and B winners won't be determined until after this Friday's (Feb. 17) games.

CAROL

From Page 20

herself in the sport.

"I'm thankful for my dad especially because he always believes in me. He's an amazing coach and a dad to me. He has helped me to keep moving forward and to do better. I would like to thank my country for the support. I would like to thank my coaches, Rodney Harmon and Alexis Casati, for believing in me and helping me in many ways."

CNMI national tennis coach and CNMI Sports Hall of Famer Jeff Race also gave props to Lee for again putting the CNMI on the map.

"I'm very proud of Carol and happy for her and her family. Out of many thousands of women playing tennis in U.S. colleges and universities she is No. 7. It's really astounding. I know that she has become much tougher mentally to get to that level in the last couple of years. Yet off the court she is one of the nicest people you'll ever meet," he said.

Lee is not the lone Yellow Jacket in the Top 50 of the ITA as teammate Kylie Blichev rose to No. 47 after her successful start to the dual season. The reigning ACC Player of the Week after defeating two ranked singles players, Bilchev is 11-4 overall in singles play and 4-0 in dual matches.

NAPU

From Page 20

noon, a battle of lizards ensued as Hopwood Middle School Hilitais and Saipan International School Geckos took to the pitch.

The game ended in a stalemate as both the Hilitais and Geckos could score one more goal, for a final of 1-1.

Anne Lee of the Geckos drew first blood and scored in the 27th minute. Silence reigned as both teams tried to regain their footing for more goals, but the defense on both sides were impenetrable.

It looked to be a W for the Geckos but Yelynn Ha broke through almost towards the end of the game to tie it up in the 49th minute.

Both teams could not get a grip on the ball as the game ended without further damage.

All teams this season have now played, with the Hilitais at the top of the standings with 1 win and 1 draw. FMS is next with 1 win, followed by 2 draws for the Geckos, 1 draw for Tanapag Middle School, and 1 loss for both DanDan Middle School and COVMS.

T-wolves outlast Mavs 124-121 despite 26-point 4th by Irving

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Nakama beats IHT to remain unscathed

PAGE 19

Carol No. 7 in latest collegiate rankings

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Georgia Tech Yellow Jacket's Carol Lee in action in this file photo.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Carol Lee broke into the Top 10 of the Intercollegiate Tennis Association's individual rankings.

The Georgia Tech Yellow Jacket came in at No. 7, marking the highest singles ranking of her collegiate career.

The 21-year-old owns a 13-4 singles record this season, including a 4-0 mark in dual matches, and is 9-4 overall in doubles.

Lee closed out last season at No. 24 in the final ITA singles rankings, picked up all-Athletic Coast Conference first team honors and earned an at-large bid to the NCAA Singles Championship.

Lee said the No. 7 ITA standings is a great honor and something she's thankful for.

"To be able to represent my school and my country, it means a lot to me. I hope this will give hope to many junior tennis players in my country, especially to my younger sister who is also playing tennis. I'm always thankful for my family who always has been helping me even though I haven't been home for more than two years."

She also thanked her father, Dong Min Lee, and her coaches at Georgia Tech for helping her become the best version of

See CAROL on Page 19

OES 1, SVES 1 dominate ES co-ed grass v-ball

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Oleai Elementary School 1 and San Vicente Elementary School 1 dominated the continuation of the Public School System Co-ed Elementary School Volleyball Tournament at the Oleai Sports Complex last Friday.

The OES Turtles 1 rotation of Jeno Pino, Jabari Olaitiman, Marvic Javaluyas, Aleizah Nepaial, Neisha Kukkun, Nianalyn Mettao, Haelie Edwards, Vicente Kaipat, and Gabriella Ruben completed a sweep of all four games they played—first against Koblerville Elementary School 2, 21-18, then a shutout game of 21-2 against Saipan Community School.

Afterwards, the Turtles continued their hot streak and defeated Saipan International School, 21-13, then finally slipped past Tinian Elementary School, in a close 22-20 game.

SVES Canaries 1, consisting of Skye Lizama, Kylee'ah Reyes, Andisa Danis, Darren Tomei, Dana Munar, Elena Kani, Tivonna Aranda, Mellecia Rran, Jude Rayphand, Sidro Kani, Liana Sokau, Mary Grace Amorada, Jonoah Santos, Luke Castro, Boyd Namelo, and Jayanna Reyes, also replicated a perfect volleyball-filled afternoon and defeated three teams.

They started their campaign against Grace Christian Academy Eagles and won, 21-5; won a close one against Sinapalo Elementary School, 22-20; and capped off the day with a win over SCS, 21-8.

Game day continued as some teams made up their games from a rain delay the previous Friday. Garapan Elementary School 1 took a shot against William S. Reyes Elementary School 2 and won, 21-13; KobES 1 staved off GES 2, 21-4; Gre-

See OES 1 on Page 19

LEIGH GASES
Chacha Ocean View Middle School's Caurie Staffler, in white, and Francisco M. Sablan Middle School's Selena Atalig go toe-to-toe in their game in the 2022-2023 NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League last Thursday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Napu Riders glide to MS girls soccer victory

LEIGH GASES
A Koblerville Elementary School student jumps for a return during a game last Feb. 3 in the Public School System Co-ed Elementary School Volleyball Tournament at the Oleai Sports Complex last Friday.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Napu Riders glided to victory over Chacha Ocean View Middle School, 2-1 in the girls middle school 2022-2023 NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League last Thursday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

From the starting whistle, the Napu Riders had a handle on the ball and Jadine Higgins capitalized for an early goal 2 minutes in. Teammate Brianni Echalico rode on the waves of her momentum as she scored a goal 8 minutes later for an early 2-0 lead.

It was all quiet in the Lancheru's front as they had yet to reap what they were trying to sow. Then, when it seemed like they would be farming goose eggs, Mya Abraham put one goal up on the board in the 23rd minute.

However, the crop season dried up as the Lancherus could not bear any more fruit and got the L.

In the first game of the after-

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